

Hindu says. If I give all my virtues unto Him, that is the greatest sacrifice, and they will go to the whole universe.

Now, this is one phase ; and what is the other message of Krishna ? "Whosoever lives in the midst of the world, and works, and gives up all the fruit of his action unto the Lord, he is never touched with the evils of the world. Just as the lotus, born under the water, rises up and blossoms above the water, even so is the man who is engaged in the activities of the world, giving up all the fruit of his activities unto the Lord."

Krishna strikes another note as a teacher of intense activity. Work, work, work, day and night, says the Gita. You may ask, "Then, where is peace?—If all through life I am to work like a cart-horse and die in harness, what am I here for?" Krishna says. "Yes, you will find peace. Flying from work is never the way to find peace." Throw off your duties if you can, and go to the top of a mountain ; even there, the mind is going—whirling, whirling, whirling. Someone asked a Sannyâsin, "Sir, have you found a nice place? How many years have you been travelling in the Himalayas?" "For forty years," replied the Sannyasin. "There are many beautiful spots to select from, and to settle down in—why did you not do so?" "Because for these forty years my mind would not allow me to do so." We all say. "Let us find peace"—but the mind will not allow us to do so.

You know the story of the man who caught a Tartar. A soldier was outside the town, and he cried out when he came near the barracks, "I have caught a Tartar." A voice called out, "Bring him in." "He won't come in, sir." "Then you come in." "He won't let me come in, sir." So, in this mind of ours, we have "caught a Tartar": neither can we tone it down, nor will it let us be toned down. We have all "caught Tartars." We all say, be quiet, and peaceful, and so forth. But every baby can

say that, and thinks he can do it. However, that is very difficult. I have tried. I threw overboard all my duties, and fled to the tops of mountains, I lived in caves and deep forests—but all the same, I “caught a Tartar,” because I had my world with me all the time. The “Tartar” is what I have in my own mind, so we must not blame poor people outside. “These circumstances are good, and these are bad,” so we say, while the “Tartar” is here, within; if we can quiet him down, we shall be all right.

Therefore Krishna teaches us not to shirk our duties, but to take them up manfully, and not think of the result. The servant has no right to question. The soldier has no right to reason. Go forward, and do not pay too much attention to the nature of the work you have to do. Ask your mind if you are unselfish. If you are, never mind anything, nothing can resist you! Plunge in! Do the duty at hand. And when you have done this, by degrees you will realise the Truth. “Whosoever in the midst of intense activity finds intense peace, whosoever in the midst of the greatest peace finds the greatest activity, he is a Yogi, he is a great soul, he has arrived at perfection.”

Now, you see that the result of this teaching is that all the duties of the world are sanctified. There is no duty in this world which we have any right to call menial: and each man's work is quite as good as that of the Emperor on his throne.

Listen to Buddha's message—a tremendous message. It has a place in our heart. Says Buddha. Root out selfishness, and everything that makes you selfish. Have neither wife, child, nor family. Be not of the world, become perfectly unselfish. A worldly man thinks he will be unselfish, but when he looks at the face of his wife it makes him selfish. The mother thinks she will be perfectly unselfish, but she looks at her baby, and immediately selfishness comes. So with everything in this

Published by  
SWAMI PAVITRANANDA  
ADVAITA ASHRAMA  
MAYAVATI, ALMORA

COPYRIGHT REGISTERED UNDER ACT XX OF 1847  
*Fifth Edition*

Board Rs. 5/-  
Cloth Rs. 6/-

Printed by M. C. Biswas  
AT THE ART PRESS,  
20, British Indian Street, Calcutta

# C O N T E N T S

PAGE

## ADDRESSES ON BHAKTI-YOGA

THE PREPARATION . . .	1
THE FIRST STEPS . . .	10
THE TEACHER OF SPIRITUALITY . .	19
THE NEED OF SYMBOLS .	31
THE CHIEF SYMBOLS . . .	38
THE ISHTAM . . .	48

## THE EPICS OF ANCIENT INDIA

THE RAMAYANA . . .	59
THE MAHABHARATA . . .	74
THOUGHTS ON THE GITA . . .	98
THE STORY OF JADA BHARATA . . .	107
THE STORY OF PRAHLADA . . .	111
THE GREAT TEACHERS OF THE WORLD . . .	116
ON LORD BUDDHA . . .	131
CHRIST, THE MESSENGER . . .	134

MY MASTER . . .	150
INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT . . .	184
THE BASIS FOR PSYCHIC OR SPIRITUAL RESEARCH . .	188
ON ART IN INDIA . . .	192
IS INDIA A BENIGHTED COUNTRY ? . . .	194

## WRITINGS—PROSE & POEMS—I

### PROSE—

IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL ? . . .	199
REINCARNATION . . .	203
ON DR PAUL DEUSSEN . . .	218
ON PROFESSOR MAX MULLER . . .	224
SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PAVHARI BABA . . .	229
ARYANS AND TAMILIANS . . .	242



	PAGE
THE SOCIAL CONFERENCE ADDRESS	249
INDIA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD .	
The Syllabus . . . . .	254
Introduction . . . . .	258
STRAY REMARKS ON THEOSOPHY	263
REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MAHARAJA OF KHETRI .	
India—the Land of Religion . . . . .	266
REPLY TO THE MADRAS ADDRESS . . . . .	277
A MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY TO A FRIEND . . . . .	300
WHAT WE BELIEVE IN . . . . .	302
OUR DUTY 'TO THE MASSES . . . . .	307
REPLY TO THE CALCUTTA ADDRESS . . . . .	310
TO MY BRAVE BOYS . . . . .	312
A PLAN OF WORK FOR INDIA . . . . .	316
POEMS—	
KALI THE MOTHER . . . . .	319
ANGELS UNAWARES, I—III . . . . .	320
TO THE AWAKENED INDIA . . . . .	322
REQUIESCAT IN PACE . . . . .	324
HOLD ON YET A WHILE, BRAVE HEART . . . . .	324
NIRVANASHATKAM, OR SIX STANZAS ON NIRVANA . . . . .	326
THE SONG OF THE SANNYASIN . . . . .	327
PEACE . . . . .	330
TRANSLATION OF WRITINGS—PROSE & POEMS—I	
PROSE—	
THE PROBLEM OF MODERN INDIA AND ITS SOLUTION . . . . .	332
RAMAKRISHNA, HIS LIFE AND SAYINGS . . . . .	342
THE PARIS CONGRESS OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS . . . . .	355
KNOWLEDGE ITS SOURCE AND ACQUIREMENT . . . . .	363
MODERN INDIA . . . . .	371
THE EDUCATION THAT INDIA NEEDS . . . . .	414
OUR PRESENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS . . . . .	421

## POEMS—

	PAGE
TO A FRIEND . . . . .	426
THE HYMN OF CREATION . . . . .	430
THE HYMN OF SAMADHI . . . . .	431
A HYMN TO THE DIVINE MOTHER . . . . .	431
A HYMN TO SHIVA . . . . .	434
A HYMN TO THE DIVINITY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA . . . . .	437
“AND LET SHYAMA DANCE THERE” . . . . .	439
A SONG I SING TO THEE . . . . .	444



ADDRESSES ON BHAKTI-YOGA







# ADDRESSES ON BHAKTI-YOGA

## THE PREPARATION

The best definition given of Bhakti-Yoga is perhaps embodied in the verse. "May that love undying which the non-discriminating have for the fleeting objects of the senses never leave this heart of mine—of me who seek after Thee!" We see what a strong love men, who do not know any better, have for sense objects, for money, dress, their wives, children, friends and possessions. What a tremendous clinging they have to all these things! So in the above prayer the sage says, "I will have that attachment, that tremendous clinging, only to Thee." This love when given to God is called Bhakti. Bhakti is not destructive, it teaches us that no one of the faculties we have has been given in vain, that through them is the natural way to come to liberation. Bhakti does not kill out our tendencies, it does not go against nature, but only gives it a higher and more powerful direction. How naturally we love objects of the senses, we cannot but do so, because they are so real to us. We do not ordinarily see anything real about higher things, but when a man has seen something real beyond the senses, beyond the universe of senses, the idea is that he can have a strong attachment, only it should be transferred to the object beyond the senses, which is God. And when the same kind of love that has before been given to sense objects is given to God, it is called Bhakti. According to the sage Râmânûja, the following are the preparations for getting that intense love.

The first is Viveka. It is a very curious thing, especially to people of the West. It means, according to



Ramanuja, "discrimination of food." Food contains all the energies that go to make up the forces of our body and mind, it has been transferred, and conserved, and given new directions in my body, but my body and mind have nothing essentially different from the food that I ate. Just as the force and matter we find in the material world become body and mind in us, so, essentially, the difference between body and mind and the food we eat, is only in manifestation. It being so, that out of the material particles of our food we construct the instrument of thought, and that from the finer forces lodged in these particles we manufacture thought itself, it naturally follows, that both this thought and the instrument will be modified by the food we take. There are certain kinds of food that produce a certain change in the mind; we see it every day. There are other sorts which produce a change in the body, and in the long run have a tremendous effect on the mind. It is a great thing to learn, a good deal of the misery we suffer, is occasioned by the food we take. You find that after a heavy and indigestible meal it is very hard to control the mind, it is running, running all the time. There are certain foods which are exciting, if you eat such food, you find that you cannot control the mind. It is obvious that after drinking a large quantity of wine, or other alcoholic beverage, a man finds that his mind is not to be controlled, it runs away from his control.

According to Ramanuja there are three things in food we must avoid. First, there is *Jāti*, the nature, or species, of the food, that must be considered. All exciting food should be avoided, as meat, for instance, this should not be taken because it is by its very nature impure. We can get it only by taking the life of another. We get pleasure for a moment, and another creature has to give up its life to give us that pleasure. Not only so, but we demoralise other human beings. It would be rather better

if every man who eats meat killed the animal himself, but, instead of doing so, society gets a class of persons to do that business for them, for doing which, it hates them. In England no butcher can serve on a jury, the idea being that he is cruel by nature. Who makes him cruel? Society. If we did not eat beef and mutton, there would be no butchers. Eating meat is only allowable for people who do very hard work, and who are not going to be Bhaktas, but if you are going to be Bhaktas, you should avoid meat. Also, all exciting foods, such as onions, garlic, and all evil-smelling food, as "sauerkraut". Any food that has been standing for days, till its condition is changed, any food whose natural juices have been almost dried up, any food that is malodorous, should be avoided.

The next thing that is to be considered as regards food is still more intricate to Western minds—it is what is called *Ashraya*, i.e., the person from whom it comes. This is rather a mysterious theory of the Hindus. The idea is that each man has a certain aura round him, and whatever thing he touches, a part of his character, as it were, his influence, is left on it. It is supposed that a man's character emanates from him, as it were, like a physical force, and whatever he touches, is affected by it. So we must take care who touches our food when it is cooked, a wicked or immoral person must not touch it. One who wants to be a Bhakta must not dine with people whom he knows to be very wicked, because their infection will come through the food.

The other form of purity to be observed is *Nimitta*, or instrument. Dirt and dust must not be in food. Food should not be brought from the market and placed on the table unwashed. We must be careful also about the saliva, and other secretions. The lips ought never, for instance, to be touched with the fingers. The mucous membrane is the most delicate part of the body, and all tendencies are conveyed very easily by the saliva. Its

contact, therefore, is to be regarded as not only offensive, but dangerous. Again, we must not eat food, half of which has been eaten by someone else. When these things are avoided in food, it becomes pure, pure food brings a pure mind, and in a pure mind is a constant memory of God.

Let me tell you the same thing as explained by another commentator, Shankarâchârya, who takes quite another view. This word for food, in Sanskrit, is derived from the root meaning to gather. Ahâra means "gathered in." What is his explanation? He says, the passage that when food is pure the mind will become pure really means that lest we become subject to the senses we should avoid the following. First as to attachment, we must not be extremely attached to anything excepting God. See everything, do everything, but be not attached. As soon as extreme attachment comes, a man loses himself, he is no more master of himself, he is a slave. If a woman is tremendously attached to a man, she becomes a slave to that man. There is no use in being a slave. There are higher things in this world than becoming a slave to a human being. Love and do good to everybody, but do not become a slave. In the first place, attachment degenerates us, individually, and in the second place, makes us extremely selfish. Owing to this failing, we want to injure others to do good to those we love. A good many of the wicked deeds done in this world are really done through attachment to certain persons. So all attachment excepting that for good works should be avoided; but love should be given to everybody. Then as to jealousy. There should be no jealousy in regard to objects of the senses; jealousy is the root of all evil, and a most difficult thing to conquer. Next, of delusion. We always take one thing for another, and act upon that, with the result that we bring misery upon ourselves. We take the bad for the good. Anything that

titillates our nerves for a moment we think as the highest good, and plunge into it immediately, but find, when it is too late, that it has given us a tremendous blow. Every day, we run into this error, and we often continue in it all our lives. When the senses, without being extremely attached, without jealousy, or without delusion, work in the world, such work or collection of impressions is called pure food, according to Shankaracharya. When pure food is taken, the mind is able to take in objects and think about them without attachment, jealousy or delusion, then the mind becomes pure, and then there is constant memory of God in that mind.

It is quite natural for one to say that Shankara's meaning is the best, but I wish to add that one should not neglect Ramanuja's interpretation either. It is only when you take care of the real material food that the rest will come. It is very true that mind is the master, but very few of us are not bound by the senses. We are all controlled by matter, and as long as we are so controlled, we must take material aids, and then, when we have become strong, we can eat or drink anything we like. We have to follow Ramanuja in taking care about food and drink, at the same time we must also take care about our mental food. It is very easy to take care about material food, but mental work must go along with it, then gradually our spiritual self will become stronger and stronger, and the physical self less assertive. Then will food hurt you no more. The great danger is that every man wants to jump at the highest ideal, but jumping is not the way. That ends only in a fall. We are bound down here, and we have to break our chains slowly. This is called Viveka, discrimination.

The next is called Vimoka, freedom from desires. He who wants to love God must get rid of extreme desires; desire nothing except God. This world is good so far as it helps one to go to the higher world. The objects of the

as it were, a glimpse now and then, has come into direct perception, even for a second, even once in its life. Immediately, "All doubts vanish for ever, and all the crookedness of the heart is made straight, and all bondages vanish, and the results of action and karma fly ; for He is seen who is the nearest of the near and the farthest of the far." That is religion, that is all of religion ; the rest is mere theory, dogma, so many ways of going to that state of direct perception. Now we are fighting over the basket and the fruits have fallen into the ditch.

If two men quarrel about religion, just ask them the question: "Have you seen God? Have you seen these things?" One man says that Christ is the only Prophet. well, has he seen Christ? "Has your father seen Him?" "No, Sir." "Has your grandfather seen Him?" "No, Sir." "Have you seen Him?" "No, Sir." "Then what are you quarrelling for? The fruits have fallen into the ditch and you are quarrelling over the basket!" Sensible men and women should be ashamed to go on quarrelling in that way!

These great Messengers and Prophets were great and true. Why? Because, each one has come to preach a great idea. Take the Prophets of India, for instance. They are the oldest of the founders of religion. We take, first, Krishna. You who have read the Gita see all through the book that the one idea is non-attachment. Remain unattached. The heart's love is due to only One. To whom? To Him who never changeth. Who is that One? It is God. Do not make the mistake of giving the heart to anything that is changing, because that is misery. You may give it to a man, but if he dies, misery is the result. You may give it to a friend, but he may to-morrow become your enemy. If you give it to your husband, he may one day quarrel with you. You may give it to your wife, and she may die the day after to-morrow. Now, this is the way the world is going on. So says Krishna in the

Gita. The Lord is the only One who never changes His love never fails. Wherever we are and whatever we do, He is ever and ever the same merciful, the same loving heart. He never changes, He is never angry, whatever we do. How can God be angry with us? Your babe does many mischievous things. are you angry with that babe? Does not God know what we are going to be? He knows we are all going to be perfect, sooner or later. He has patience, infinite patience. We must love Him, and everyone that lives—only in and through Him. This is the key-note. You must love the wife, but not for the wife's sake. "Never, O Beloved, is the husband loved on account of the husband, but because the Lord is in the husband". The Vedanta philosophy says that even in the love of the husband and wife, although the wife is thinking that she is loving the husband, the real attraction is the Lord, who is present there. He is the only attraction, there is no other, but the wife in most cases does not know that it is so, but ignorantly she is doing the right thing, which is, loving the Lord. Only, when one does it ignorantly, it may bring pain. If one does it knowingly, that is salvation. This is what our Scriptures say. Wherever there is love, wherever there is a spark of joy, know that to be a spark of His presence, because He is Joy, Blessedness and Love itself. Without that there cannot be any love.

This is the trend of Krishna's instruction all the time. He has implanted that upon His race, so that when a Hindu does anything, even if he drinks water—he says, "If there is virtue in it, let it go to the Lord". The Buddhist says, if he does any good deed, "Let the merit of the good deed belong to the world, if there is any virtue in what I do, let it go to the world, and let the evils of the world come to me". The Hindu says he is a great believer in God, the Hindu says that God is omnipotent and that He is the Soul of every soul everywhere, the

Hindu says: If I give all my virtues unto Him, that is the greatest sacrifice, and they will go to the whole universe

Now, this is one phase; and what is the other message of Krishna? "Whosoever lives in the midst of the world, and works, and gives up all the fruit of his action unto the Lord, he is never touched with the evils of the world. Just as the lotus, born under the water, rises up and blossoms above the water, even so is the man who is engaged in the activities of the world, giving up all the fruit of his activities unto the Lord."

Krishna strikes another note as a teacher of intense activity. Work, work, work, day and night, says the Gita. You may ask, "Then, where is peace?—If all through life I am to work like a cart-horse and die in harness, what am I here for?" Krishna says: "Yes, you will find peace. Flying from work is never the way to find peace." Throw off your duties if you can, and go to the top of a mountain; even there, the mind is going—whirling, whirling, whirling. Someone asked a Sannyâsin, "Sir, have you found a nice place? How many years have you been travelling in the Himalayas?" "For forty years," replied the Sannyâsin. "There are many beautiful spots to select from, and to settle down in—why did you not do so?" "Because for these forty years my mind would not allow me to do so." We all say: "Let us find peace"—but the mind will not allow us to do so.

You know the story of the man who caught a Tartar. A soldier was outside the town, and he cried out when he came near the barracks, "I have caught a Tartar." A voice called out, "Bring him in." "He won't come in, sir." "Then you come in." "He won't let me come in, sir." So, in this mind of ours, we have "caught a Tartar": neither can we tone it down, nor will it let us be toned down. We have all "caught Tartars." We all say, be quiet, and peaceful, and so forth. But every baby can

say that, and thinks he can do it. However, that is very difficult. I have tried. I threw overboard all my duties, and fled to the tops of mountains, I lived in caves and deep forests—but all the same, I “caught a Tartar,” because I had my world with me all the time. The “Tartar” is what I have in my own mind, so we must not blame poor people outside. “These circumstances are good, and these are bad,” so we say, while the “Tartar” is here, within, if we can quiet him down, we shall be all right.

Therefore Krishna teaches us not to shirk our duties, but to take them up manfully, and not think of the result. The servant has no right to question. The soldier has no right to reason. Go forward, and do not pay too much attention to the nature of the work you have to do. Ask your mind if you are unselfish. If you are, never mind anything, nothing can resist you! Plunge in! Do the duty at hand. And when you have done this, by degrees you will realise the Truth. “Whosoever in the midst of intense activity finds intense peace, whosoever in the midst of the greatest peace finds the greatest activity, he is a Yogi, he is a great soul, he has arrived at perfection.”

Now, you see that the result of this teaching is that all the duties of the world are sanctified. There is no duty in this world which we have any right to call menial, and each man's work is quite as good as that of the Emperor on his throne.

Listen to Buddha's message—a tremendous message. It has a place in our heart. Says Buddha: Root out selfishness, and everything that makes you selfish. Have neither wife, child, nor family. Be not of the world, become perfectly unselfish. A worldly man thinks he will be unselfish, but when he looks at the face of his wife it makes him selfish. The mother thinks she will be perfectly unselfish, but she looks at her baby, and immediately selfishness comes. So with everything in this



world. As soon as selfish desires arise, as soon as some selfish pursuit is followed, immediately the whole man, the real man, is gone : he is like a brute, he is a slave, he forgets his fellow-men. No more does he say, "You first and I afterwards," but it is "I first and let every one else look out for himself."

We find that Krishna's message has also a place for us. Without that message, we cannot move at all. We cannot conscientiously, and with peace, joy and happiness, take up any duty of our lives without listening to the message of Krishna . "Be not afraid even if there is evil in your work, for there is no work which has no evil." "Leave it unto the Lord, and 'do not look for the results.'"

On the other hand, there is a corner in the heart for the other message . Time flies : this world is finite and all misery. With your good food, nice clothes, and your comfortable home, O sleeping man and woman, do you ever think of the millions that are starving and dying? Think of the great fact that it is all misery, misery, misery ! Note the first utterance of the child, when it enters into the world, it weeps . That is the fact—the child weeps This is a place for weeping ! If we listen to the Messenger, we should not be selfish

Behold another Messenger, He of Nazareth He teaches: "Be ready, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." I have pondered over the message of Krishna, and am trying to work without attachment, but sometimes I forget. Then, suddenly, comes to me the message of Buddha . "Take care, for everything in the world is evanescent, and there is always misery in this life " I listen to that, and I am uncertain which to accept Then again comes, like a thunderbolt, the message: Be ready, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand Do not delay a moment Leave nothing for to-morrow Get ready for the final event, which may overtake you immediately,

even now That message, also, has a place, and we acknowledge it We salute the Messenger, we salute the Lord

And then comes Mohammed, the Messenger of equality You ask, "What good can there be in his religion?" If there were no good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives, because the good alone is strong, therefore it survives How long is the life of an impure man, even in this life? Is not the life of the pure man much longer? Without doubt, for purity is strength, goodness is strength How could Mohammedanism have lived, had there been nothing good in its teaching? There is much good Mohammed was the Prophet of equality, of the brotherhood of man, the brotherhood of all Mussalmans

So we see that each Prophet, each Messenger, has a particular message When you first listen to that message, and then look at his life, you see his whole life stands explained, radiant

Now, ignorant fools start twenty thousand theories, and put forward, according to their own mental development, explanations to suit their own ideas, and ascribe them to these great Teachers They take their teachings and put their misconstruction upon them With every great Prophet his life is the only commentary Look at his life what he did will bear out the texts Read the Gita, and you will find that it is exactly borne out by the life of the Teacher

Mohammed by his life showed that amongst Mohammedans there should be perfect equality and brotherhood There was no question of race, caste, creed, colour or sex The Sultan of Turkey may buy a Negro from the mart of Africa, and bring him in chains to Turkey, but should he become a Mohammedan, and have sufficient merit and abilities, he might even marry the daughter of the Sultan Compare this with the way in which the Negroes and the

American Indians are treated in this country ! And what do Hindus do ? If one of your missionaries chance to touch the food of an orthodox person, he would throw it away. Notwithstanding our grand philosophy you note our weakness in practice ; but there you see the greatness of the Mohammedan beyond other races, showing itself in equality, perfect equality regardless of race or colour.

Will other and greater Prophets come ? Certainly they will come in this world. But do not look forward to that. I should better like that each one of you became a Prophet of this real New Testament, which is made up of all the Old Testaments. Take all the old messages, supplement them with your own realisations, and become a Prophet unto others. Each one of these Teachers has been great, each has left something for us ; they have been our Gods. We salute them, we are their servants ; and, all the same, we salute ourselves ; for if they have been Prophets and children of God, we also are the same. They reached their perfection, and we are going to attain ours now. Remember the words of Jesus : "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand !" This very moment let every one of us make a staunch resolution : "I will become a Prophet, I will become a messenger of Light, I will become a child of God, nay, I will become a God !"

---

## ON LORD BUDDHA

*(Delivered in Detroit)*

In every religion we find one type of self-devotion particularly developed. The type of working without a motive is most highly developed in Buddhism. Do not mistake Buddhism and Brâhmanism. In this country you are very apt to do so. Buddhism is one of our sects. It was founded by a great man called Gautama, who became disgusted at the eternal metaphysical discussions of his day, and the cumbrous rituals, and more especially with the caste system. Some people say that we are born to a certain state, and therefore we are superior to others who are not thus born. He was also against the tremendous priestcraft. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power, and was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories about God. He was often asked if there was a God, and he answered, he did not know. When asked about right conduct he would reply—Do good and be good. There came five Brahmanas, who asked him to settle their discussion. One said, "Sir, my Book says that God is such and such, and that this is the way to come to God." Another said, "That is wrong, for my Book says such and such, and this is the way to come to God", and so the others. He listened calmly to all of them, and then asked them one by one, "Does any one of your Books say that God becomes angry, that He ever injures any one, that He is impure?" "No, Sir, they all teach that God is pure and good." "Then, my friends, why do you not become pure and good first, that you may know what God is?"

Of course I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysics, for myself. I entirely differ in many respects, but, because I differ, is that any reason why I should not see the beauty of the man? He was the only man who was bereft of all motive power. There were other great men, who all said they were the Incarnations of God Himself, and that those who would believe in them would go to heaven. But what did Buddha say with his dying breath? "None can help you ; help yourself ; work out your own salvation " He said about himself, "Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky , I, Gautama, have reached that state , you will all reach that too if you struggle for it." Bereft of all motive power, he did not want to go to heaven, did not want money ; he gave up his throne and everything else, and went about begging his bread through the streets of India, preaching for the good of men and animals with a heart as wide as the ocean. He was the only man who was ever ready to give up his life for animals, to stop a sacrifice. He once said to a king, "If the sacrifice of a lamb helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man will help you better, so sacrifice me." The king was astonished. And yet this man was without any motive power. He stands as the perfection of the active type, and the very height to which he attained, shows that through the power of work we can also attain to the highest spirituality.

To many the path becomes easier if they believe in God. But the life of Buddha shows that even a man who does not believe in God, has no metaphysics, belongs to no sect, and does not go to any church, or temple, and is a confessed materialist, even he can attain to the highest. We have no right to judge him. I wish I had one infinitesimal part of Buddha's heart. Buddha may or may not have believed in God ; that does not matter to me. He reached the same state of perfection to which others come by Bhakti—love of God, Yoga, or Jnâna. Perfection does

not come from belief or faith    Talk does not count for  
anything    Parrots can do that    Perfection comes through  
the disinterested performance of action

---

## CHRIST, THE MESSENGER

*(A lecture delivered at Los Angeles, California, 1900)*

The wave rises on the ocean, and there is a hollow. Again another wave rises, perhaps bigger than the former, to fall down again, similarly, again to rise—driving onward. In the march of events, we notice the rise and fall, and we generally look towards the rise, forgetting the fall. But both are necessary, and both are great. This is the nature of the universe. Whether in the world of our thoughts, the world of our relations in society, or in our spiritual affairs, the same movement of succession, of rises and falls, is going on. Hence great predominances in the march of events, the liberal ideals, are marshalled ahead, to sink down, to digest, as it were, to ruminate over the past—to adjust, to conserve, to gather strength once more for a rise and a bigger rise.

The history of nations, also, has ever been like that. The great soul, the Messenger we are to study this afternoon, came at a period of the history of his race which we may well designate as a great fall. We catch only little glimpses here and there of the stray records that have been kept of his sayings and doings; for, verily it has been well said, that the doings and sayings of that great soul would fill the world if they had all been written down. And the three years of his ministry were like one compressed, concentrated age, which it has taken nineteen hundred years to unfold, and who knows how much longer it will yet take! Little men like you and me are simply the recipients of just a little energy. A few minutes, a few hours, a few years at best, are enough to spend it all, to stretch it out, as it were, to its fullest strength, and then we are gone for ever. But mark this giant that came; centuries and ages

pass, yet the energy that he left upon the world is not yet stretched, nor yet expended to its full. It goes on adding new vigour as the ages roll on.

Now what you see in the life of Christ is the life of all the past. The life of every man is, in a manner, the life of the past. It comes to him through heredity, through surroundings, through education, through his own reincarnation—the past of the race. In a manner, the past of the earth, the past of the whole world is there, upon every soul. What are we, in the present, but a result, an effect, in the hands of that infinite past? What are we but floating wavelets in the eternal current of events, irresistibly moved forward and onward and incapable of rest? But you and I are only little things, bubbles. There are always some giant waves in the ocean of affairs, and in you and me the life of the past race has been embodied only a little, but there are giants who embody, as it were, almost the whole of the past and who stretch out their hands for the future. These are the sign-posts here and there, which point to the march of humanity, these are verily gigantic, their shadows covering the earth—they stand undying, eternal! As it has been said by the same Messenger. “No man hath seen God at any time, but through the Son.” And that is true. And where shall we see God but in the Son? It is true that you and I, and the poorest of us, the meanest even, embody that God, even reflect that God. The vibration of light is everywhere, omnipresent, but we have to strike the light of the lamp before we can see the light. The Omnipresent God of the universe cannot be seen until He is reflected by these giant lamps of the earth—the Prophets, the man-Gods, the Incarnations, the embodiments of God.

We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of light, compare his character with the highest ideal of God that you ever formed, and you will



find that your God falls short of the ideal, and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions. You cannot even form a higher ideal of God than what the actually embodied have practically realised, and set before us as an example. Is it wrong, therefore, to worship these as God? Is it a sin to fall at the feet of these man-Gods, and worship them as the only divine beings in the world? If they are really, actually, higher than all our conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of worship. However much you may try, by struggle, by abstraction, by whatsoever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the world of men, your world is human, your religion is human, and your God is human. And that must be so. Who is not practical enough to take up an actually existing thing, and give up an idea which is only an abstraction, which he cannot grasp, and is difficult of approach except through a concrete medium? Therefore, these Incarnations of God have been worshipped in all ages and in all countries.

We are now going to study a little of the life of Christ, the Incarnation of the Jews. When Christ was born, the Jews were in that state which I call a state of fall between two waves, a state of conservatism, a state where the human mind is, as it were, tired for the time being of moving forward and is taking care only of what it has already, a state when the attention is more bent upon particulars, upon details, than upon the great, general and bigger problems of life, a state of stagnation, rather than a towing ahead; a state of suffering more than of doing. Mark you, I do not blame this state of things. We have no right to criticise it—because had it not been for this fall, the next rise, which was embodied in Jesus of Nazareth, would have been impossible. The Pharisees and Sadducees might have been insincere, they might have been doing things which they ought not to have done, they

might have been even hypocrites, but whatever they were, these factors were the very cause, of which the Messenger was the effect. The Pharisees and Sadducees at one end were the very impetus which came out at the other end as the gigantic brain of Jesus of Nazareth

The attention to forms, to formulas, to the everyday details of religion, and to rituals, may sometimes be laughed at, but nevertheless, within them is strength. Many times in the rushing forward we lose much strength. As a fact the fanatic is stronger than the liberal man. Even the fanatic, therefore, has one great virtue, he conserves energy, a tremendous amount of it. As with the individual, so with the race, energy is gathered to be conserved. Hemmed in all around by external enemies, driven to focus in a centre by the Romans, by the Hellenic tendencies in the world of intellect, by waves from Persia, India and Alexandria—hemmed in physically, mentally, and morally—there stood the race with an inherent, conservative, tremendous strength, which their descendants have not lost even to-day. And the race was forced to concentrate and focus all its energies upon Jerusalem and Judaism. But all power when once gathered cannot remain collected, it must expend and expand itself. There is no power on earth which can be kept long confined within a narrow limit. It cannot be kept compressed too long to allow of expansion at a subsequent period.

This concentrated energy amongst the Jewish race found its expression at the next period, in the rise of Christianity. The gathered streams collected into a body. Gradually, all the little streams joined together, and became a surging wave on the top of which we find standing out the character of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, every Prophet is a creation of his own times, the creation of the past of his race, he, himself, is the creator of the future. The cause of to-day is the effect of the past and the cause

for the future. In this position stands the Messenger. In him is embodied all that is the best and greatest in his own race, the meaning, the life, for which that race has struggled for ages ; and he, himself, is the impetus for the future, not only to his own race but to unnumbered other races of the world.

We must bear another fact in mind : that my view of the great Prophet of Nazareth would be from the standpoint of the Orient. Many times you forget, also, that the Nazarene himself was an Oriental of Orientals. With all your attempts to paint him with blue eyes and yellow hair, the Nazarene was still an Oriental. All the similes, the imageries, in which the Bible is written—the scenes, the locations, the attitudes, the groups, the poetry and symbol,—speak to you of the Orient : of the bright sky, of the heat, of the sun, of the desert, of the thirsty men and animals, of men and women coming with pitchers on their heads to fill them at the wells ; of the flocks, of the ploughmen of the cultivation that is going on around ; of the water-mill and wheel, of the mill-pond, of the mill-stones—all these are to be seen to-day in Asia.

The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. The voice of Europe is the voice of politics. Each is great in its own sphere. The voice of Europe is the voice of ancient Greece. To the Greek mind, his immediate society was all in all. Beyond that, it is Barbarian—none but the Greek has the right to live. Whatever the Greeks do is right and correct ; whatever else there exists in the world is neither right nor correct, nor should be allowed to live. It is intensely human in its sympathies, intensely natural, intensely artistic, therefore. The Greek lives entirely in this world. He does not care to dream. Even his poetry is practical. His gods and goddesses are not only human beings, but intensely human, with all human passions and feelings almost the same as with any of us. He loves what is beautiful, but, mind you, it is

always external nature · the beauty of the hills, of the snows, of the flowers, the beauty of forms and of figures, the beauty in the human face, and, more often, in the human form—that is what the Greeks liked And the Greeks being the teachers of all subsequent Europeanism, the voice of Europe is Greek

There is another type in Asia Think of that vast, huge continent, whose mountain-tops go beyond the clouds, almost touching the canopy of heaven's blue, a rolling desert of miles upon miles, where a drop of water cannot be found, neither will a blade of grass grow, interminable forests, and gigantic rivers rushing down into the sea. In the midst of all these surroundings, the Oriental love of the beautiful and of the sublime developed itself in another direction It looked inside, and not outside. There is also the thirst for nature, and there is also the same thirst for power, there is also the same thirst for excellence, the same idea of the Greek and Barbarian, but it has extended over a huge circle In Asia, even to-day, birth or colour or language never makes a race That which makes a race is its religion We are all Christians; we are all Mohammedans, we are all Hindus, or all Buddhists No matter if a Buddhist is a Chinaman, or is a man from Persia, they think that they are brothers, because of their professing the same religion Religion is the tie, the unity of humanity And then again, the Oriental, for the same reason, is a visionary, is a born dreamer The ripples of the waterfalls, the songs of the birds, the beauties of the sun and moon and the stars and the whole earth, are pleasant enough, but they are not sufficient for the Oriental mind He wants to dream a dream beyond He wants to go beyond the present The present, as it were, is nothing to him The Orient has been the cradle of the human race for ages, and all the vicissitudes of fortune are there Kingdoms succeeding kingdoms, empires succeeding empires, human power,

glory and wealth, all rolling down there: a Golgotha of power and learning That is the Orient: a Golgotha of power, of kingdoms, of learning. No wonder, the Oriental mind looks with contempt upon the things of this world and naturally wants to see something that changeth not, something which dieth not, something which in the midst of this world of misery and death is eternal, blissful, undying An Oriental Prophet never tires of insisting upon these ideals; and, as for Prophets, you may also remember that without one exception, all the Messengers were Orientals

We see, therefore, in the life of this great Messenger of life, the first watchword: "Not this life, but something higher"; and, like the true son of the Orient, he is practical in that You people of the West are practical in your own department, in military affairs, and in managing political circles and other things Perhaps the Oriental is not practical in those ways, but he is practical in his own field: he is practical in religion If one preaches a philosophy, to-morrow there are hundreds who will struggle their best to make it practical in their lives If a man preaches that standing on one foot would lead to salvation, he will immediately get five hundred to stand on one foot. You may call it ludicrous; but, mark you, beneath that is their philosophy—that intense practicality In the West, plans of salvation mean intellectual gymnastics, plans which are never worked out, never brought into practical life. In the West, the preacher who talks the best is the greatest preacher

So, we find Jesus of Nazareth, in the first place, the true son of the Orient, intensely practical. He has no faith in this evanescent world and all its belongings. No need of text-torturing, as is the fashion in the West in modern times, no need of stretching out texts until they will not stretch any more Texts are not India rubber, and even that has its limits Now, no making of religion to pander

° to the sense vanity of the present day! Mark you, let us all be honest. If we cannot follow the ideal, let us confess our weakness, but not degrade it, let not any try to pull it down. One gets sick at heart at the different accounts of the life of the Christ that Western people give. I do not know what he was or what he was not! One would make him a great politician, another, perhaps, would make of him a great military general, another, a great patriotic Jew, and so on. Is there any warrant in the books for all such assumptions? The best commentary on the life of a great teacher is his own life. "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." That is what Christ says is the only way to salvation, he lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth and ashes that we cannot do that. We still have fondness for "me" and "mine." We want property, money, wealth. Woe unto us! Let us confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of Humanity! He had no family ties. But do you think that that Man had any physical ideas in him? Do you think that this mass of light, this God and not-man, came down to earth, to be the brother of animals? And yet, people make him preach all sorts of things. He had no sex ideas! He was a soul! Nothing but a soul, just working a body, for the good of humanity, and that was all his relation to the body. In the soul there is no sex. The disembodied soul has no relationship to the animal, no relationship to the body. The ideal may be far away beyond us. But never mind, keep to the ideal. Let us confess that it is our ideal, but we cannot approach it yet.

He had no other occupation in life, no other thought except that one, that he was a Spirit. He was a disembodied, unfettered, unbound Spirit. And not only so, but he, with his marvellous vision, had found that every man and woman, whether Jew or Gentile, whether rich or poor, whether saint or sinner, was the embodiment of the same

undying Spirit as himself. Therefore, the one work his whole life showed, was calling upon them to realise their own spiritual nature. Give up, he says, these superstitious dreams that you are low and that you are poor. Think not that you are trampled upon and tyrannised over as if you were slaves, for within you is something that can never be tyrannised over, never be trampled upon, never be troubled, never be killed. You are all Sons of God, Immortal Spirit. "Know", he declared, "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you." "I and my Father are one." Dare you stand up and say, not only that "I am the Son of God" but I shall also find in my heart of hearts that "I and my Father are one." That was what Jesus of Nazareth said. He never talks of this world and of this life. He has nothing to do with it, except that he wants to get hold of the world as it is, give it a push and drive it forward and onward until the whole world has reached to the effulgent Light of God, until everyone has realised his spiritual nature, until death is vanished and misery banished.

We have read the different stories that have been written about him; we know the scholars and their writings, and the higher criticism and we know all that has been done by study. We are not here to discuss how much of the New Testament is true, we are not here to discuss how much of that life is historical. It does not matter at all whether the New Testament was written within five hundred years of his birth, nor does it matter, even, how much of that life is true. But there is something behind it, something we want to imitate. To tell a lie, you have to imitate a truth, and that truth is a fact. You cannot imitate that which never existed. You cannot imitate that which you never perceived. But there must have been a nucleus, a tremendous power that came down, a marvellous manifestation of spiritual power,—and of that we are speaking. It stands there. Therefore, we are not

afraid of all the criticisms of the scholars. If I, as an Oriental, have to worship Jesus of Nazareth, there is only one way left to me, that is, to worship him as God and nothing else. Have we no right to worship him in that way, do you mean to say? If we bring him down to our own level and simply pay him a little respect, as a great man, why should we worship at all? Our Scriptures say, "These great children of Light, who manifest the Light themselves, who are Light themselves, they being worshipped, become, as it were, one with us and we become one with them."

For, you see, in three ways man perceives God. At first the undeveloped intellect of the uneducated man sees God as far away, up in the heavens somewhere, sitting on a throne, as a great Judge. He looks upon Him as a fire, as a terror. Now, that is good, for there is nothing bad in it. You must remember that humanity travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, it may be, if you like it better, from lower truth to higher truth, but never from error to truth. Suppose you start from here and travel towards the sun in a straight line. From here the sun looks only small in size. Suppose you go forward a million miles, the sun will be much bigger. At every stage the sun will become bigger and bigger. Suppose twenty thousand photographs had been taken of the same sun, from different standpoints, these twenty thousand photographs will all certainly differ from one another. But can you deny that each is a photograph of the same sun? So all forms of religion, high or low, are just different stages toward that eternal state of Light, which is God Himself. Some embody a lower view, some a higher, and that is all the difference. Therefore, the religions of the unthinking masses all over the world must be, and have always been, of a God who is outside of the universe, who lives in heaven, who governs from that place, who is a punisher of the bad and a rewarder of the good, and so on. As man



advanced spiritually, he began to feel that God was omnipresent, that He must be in him, that He must be everywhere, that He was not a distant God, but clearly the Soul of all souls. As my soul moves my body, even so is God the mover of my soul. Soul within soul. And a few individuals who had developed enough and were pure enough, went still further, and at last found God. As the New Testament says "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And they found at last that they and the Father were one.

You find that all these three stages are taught by the Great Teacher in the New Testament. Note the Common Prayer he taught. "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," and so on—a simple prayer, a child's prayer. Mark you, it is the "Common Prayer" because it is intended for the uneducated masses. To a higher circle, to those who had advanced a little more, he gave a more elevated teaching: "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Do you remember that? And then, when the Jews asked him who he was, he declared that he and his Father were one, and the Jews thought that that was blasphemy. What did he mean by that? This has been also told by your old Prophets. "Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High." Mark the same three stages. You will find that it is easier for you to begin with the first and end with the last.

The Messenger came to show the path: that the Spirit is not in forms, that it is not through all sorts of vexatious and knotty problems of philosophy that you know the Spirit. Better that you had no learning, better that you never read a book in your life. These are not at all necessary for salvation—neither wealth, nor position, nor power, not even learning—but what is necessary is that one thing, purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart," for the Spirit in its own nature is pure. How can it be otherwise? It is of God, it has come from God. In the language

of the Bible, "It is the breath of God " In the language of the Koran, "It is the soul of God." Do you mean to say that the Spirit of God can ever be impure? But, alas, it has been, as it were, covered over with the dust and dirt of ages, through our own actions, good and evil. Various works which were not correct, which were not true, have covered the same Spirit with the dust and dirt of the ignorance of ages. It is only necessary to clear away the dust and dirt, and then the Spirit shines immediately. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God " "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you " Where goest thou to seek for the Kingdom of God? asks Jesus of Nazareth, when it is there, within you. Cleanse the Spirit, and it is there. It is already yours. How can you get what is not yours? It is yours by right. You are the heirs of immortality, sons of the Eternal Father.

This is the great lesson of the Messenger, and another which is the basis of all religions, is renunciation. How can you make the Spirit pure? By renunciation. A rich young man asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me " And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. We are all more or less like that. The Voice is ringing in our ears day and night. In the midst of our pleasures and joys, in the midst of worldly things, we think that we have forgotten everything else. Then comes a moment's pause and the Voice rings in our ears. "Give up all that thou hast and follow Me " "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it " For whoever gives up this life for His sake, finds the life immortal. In the midst of all our weakness there is a moment of pause and the Voice

rings. "Give up all that thou hast; give it to the poor and follow Me." This is the one ideal he preaches, and this has been the ideal preached by all the great Prophets of the world—renunciation. What is meant by renunciation? That there is only one ideal in morality, unselfishness. Be selfless. The ideal is perfect unselfishness. When a man is struck on the right cheek, he turns the left also. When a man's coat is carried off, he gives away his cloak also.

We should work in the best way we can, without dragging the ideal down. Here is the ideal. When a man has no more self in him, no possession, nothing to call "me" or "mine," has given himself up entirely, destroyed himself as it were—in that man is God Himself; for in him self-will is gone, crushed out, annihilated. That is the ideal man. We cannot reach that state yet, yet, let us worship the ideal, and slowly, struggle to reach the ideal, though maybe with faltering steps. It may be to-morrow, or it may be a thousand years hence, but that ideal has to be reached. For it is not only the end, but also the means. To be unselfish, perfectly selfless, is salvation itself, for the man within dies, and God alone remains.

One more point. All the teachers of humanity are unselfish. Suppose Jesus of Nazareth was teaching, and a man came and told him, "What you teach is beautiful. I believe that it is the way to perfection and I am ready to follow it, but I do not care to worship you as the only begotten Son of God." What would be the answer of Jesus of Nazareth? "Very well, brother, follow the ideal and advance in your own way. I do not care whether you give me the credit for the teaching or not. I am not a shopkeeper. I do not trade in religion. I only teach truth, and truth is nobody's property. Nobody can patent truth. Truth is God Himself. Go forward." But what the disciples say nowadays is: "No matter whether you

practise the teachings or not, do you give credit to the Man? If you credit the Master, you will be saved, if not, there is no salvation for you." And thus the whole teaching of the Master is degenerated and all the struggle and fight is for the personality of the Man. They do not know that in imposing that difference, they are, in a manner, bringing shame to the very Man they want to honour—the very Man that would have shrunk with shame from such an idea. What did he care if there was one man in the world that remembered him or not? He had to deliver his message, and he gave it. And if he had twenty thousand lives he would give them all up for the poorest man in the world. If he had to be tortured millions of times, for a million despised Samaritans, and if for each one of them the sacrifice of his own life would be the only condition of salvation, he would have given his life. And all this without wishing to have his name known even to a single person. Quiet, unknown, silent, would he work, just as the Lord works. Now, what would the disciple say? He will tell you that you may be a perfect man, perfectly unselfish, but unless you give the credit to our Teacher, to our Saint, it is of no avail. Why? What is the origin of this superstition, this ignorance? The disciple thinks that the Lord can manifest Himself only once. There lies the whole mistake. God manifests Himself to you in man. But throughout nature, what happens once must have happened before, and must happen in future. There is nothing in nature which is not bound by law, and that means that whatever happens once, must go on and must have been going on.

In India they have the same idea of the Incarnations of God. One of their great Incarnations, Krishna, whose grand Sermon, the Bhagavad-Gita, some of you might have read, says—"Though I am unborn, of changeless nature and Lord of beings, yet subjugating My Prakriti, I come into being by My own Mâyâ. Whenever virtue subsides

and immorality prevails, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being, in every age " Whenever the world goes down, the Lord comes to help it forward, and so He does from time to time and place to place In another passage He speaks to this effect: Wherever thou findest a great soul of immense power and purity struggling to raise humanity, know that he is born of My splendour, that I am there working through him

Let us, therefore, find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth but in all the great Ones that have preceded him, in all that came after him, and all that are yet to come Our worship is unbounded and free They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God They are all pure and unselfish, they struggled, and gave up their lives for us, poor human beings They each and all suffer vicarious atonement for every one of us, and also for all that are to come hereafter

In a sense you are all Prophets, every one of you is a Prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great Prophets were giants—they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders. Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we are doing the same task, in our little circles, in our little homes, we are bearing our little crosses There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his own cross But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the divine For, know for certain, that the moment the touch of the divine is lost there would be annihilation And because none can be annihilated, there is always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and

degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant touch with the divine

Our salutations go to all the past Prophets, whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime or creed ! Our salutations go to all those God-like men and women who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth, colour or race ! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future—living Gods—to work unselfishly for our descendants !

---

## MY MASTER

*(Delivered in New York)*

"Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to help mankind," declares Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita. Whenever this world of ours, on account of growth, on account of added circumstances, requires a new adjustment, a wave of power comes, and as a man is acting on two planes, the spiritual and the material, waves of adjustment come on both planes. On the one side, of the adjustment on the material plane, Europe has mainly been the basis during modern times, and of the adjustment on the other, the spiritual plane, Asia has been the basis throughout the history of the world. To-day, man requires one more adjustment on the spiritual plane; to-day when material ideas are at the height of their glory and power, to-day, when man is likely to forget his divine nature, through his growing dependence on matter, and is likely to be reduced to a mere money-making machine, an adjustment is necessary, the voice has spoken, and the power is coming to drive away the clouds of gathering materialism. The power has been set in motion which, at no distant date, will bring unto mankind once more the memory of its real nature, and again the place from which this power will start will be Asia.

This world of ours is on the plan of the division of labour. It is vain to say that one man shall possess everything. Yet how childish we are! The baby in its ignorance thinks that its doll is the only possession that is to be coveted in this whole universe. So a nation which is great in the possession of material power thinks that that is all that is to be coveted, that that is all that is meant by progress, that that is all that is meant by civilisation, and if

there are other nations which do not care for possession, and do not possess that power, they are not fit to live, their whole existence is useless! On the other hand, another nation may think that mere material civilisation is utterly useless. From the Orient came the voice which once told the world that if a man possesses everything that is under the sun and does not possess spirituality, what avails it? This is the Oriental type, the other is the Occidental type.

Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonising, the mingling of these two ideals. To the Oriental, the world of Spirit is as real as to the Occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the Oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for, in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the Occidental he is a dreamer, to the Oriental, the Occidental is a dreamer, playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. Each calls the other a dreamer. But the Oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy, and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this will claim that happiness is in the machine, but it is always in the mind. The man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else. And what, after all, is this power of machinery? Why should a man who can send a current of electricity through a wire be called a very great man, and a very intelligent man? Does not nature do a million times more than that every moment? Why not then fall down and worship nature? What avails it if you have power over the whole of the world, if you have mastered every atom in the universe? That will not make you happy unless you have the power of happiness in yourself, until you have conquered yourself. Man is born to conquer nature,



it is true, but the Occidental means by "nature," only physical or external nature. It is true that external nature is majestic, with its mountains, and oceans, and rivers, and with its infinite powers and varieties. Yet there is a more majestic internal nature of man, higher than the sun, moon and stars, higher than this earth of ours, higher than the physical universe, transcending these little lives of ours, and it affords another field of study. There the Orientals excel, just as the Occidentals excel in the other. Therefore it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn about the Spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.

I am going to present before you the life of one man who has put in motion such a wave in India. But before going into the life of this man, I will try to present before you the secret of India, what India means. If those whose eyes have been blinded by the glamour of material things, whose whole dedication of life is to eating and drinking and enjoying, whose ideal of possession is lands and gold, whose ideal of pleasure is that of the senses, whose God is money, and whose goal is a life of ease and comfort in this world and death after that, whose minds never look forward, and who rarely think of anything higher than the sense objects in the midst of which they live—if such as these go to India, what do they see? Poverty, squalor, superstition, darkness, hideousness everywhere. Why? Because in their minds enlightenment means dress, education, social politeness. Whereas Occidental nations have used every effort to improve their material position, India has done differently. There, live the only men in the world who, in the whole history of

humanity, never went beyond their frontiers to conquer any one, who never coveted that which belonged to any one else, whose only fault was that their lands were so fertile, and they accumulated wealth by the hard labour of their hands, and so tempted other nations to come and despoil them. They are contented to be despoiled, and to be called barbarians, and in return they want to send to this world visions of the Supreme, to lay bare for the world the secrets of human nature, to rend the veil that conceals the real man, because they know the dream, because they know that behind this materialism lives the real, divine nature of man which no sin can tarnish, no crime can spoil, no lust can taint, which fire cannot burn, nor water wet, which heat cannot dry, nor death kill, and to them this true nature of man is as real as is any material object to the senses of an Occidental.

Just as you are brave to jump at the mouth of a cannon with a hurrah, just as you are brave in the name of patriotism, to stand up and give up your lives for your country, so are they brave in the name of God. There it is that when a man declares that this is a world of ideas, that it is all a dream, he casts off clothes and property to demonstrate that what he believes and thinks is true. There it is that a man sits on the bank of a river, when he has known that life is eternal, and wants to give up his body just as nothing, just as you can give up a bit of straw. Therein lies their heroism, that they are ready to face death as a brother because they are convinced that there is no death for them. Therein lies the strength that has made them invincible through hundreds of years of oppression and foreign invasion and tyranny. The nation lives to-day, and in that nation even in the days of the direst disaster, spiritual giants have never failed to arise. Asia produces giants in spirituality, just as the Occident produces giants in politics, giants in

science. In the beginning of the present century, when Western influence began to pour into India, when Western conquerors, sword in hand, came to demonstrate to the children of the sages that they were mere barbarians, a race of dreamers, that their religion was but mythology, and god and soul and everything they had been struggling for, were mere words without meaning, that the thousands of years of struggle, the thousands of years of endless renunciation, had all been in vain, the question began to be agitated among young men at the universities whether the whole national existence up to then had been a failure, whether they must begin anew on the Occidental plan, tear up their old books, burn their philosophies, drive away their preachers, and break down their temples. Did not the Occidental conqueror, the man who demonstrated his religion with sword and gun, say, that all the old ways were mere superstition and idolatry? Children brought up and educated in the new schools started on the Occidental plan, drank in these ideas, from their childhood, and it is not to be wondered at that doubts arose. But instead of throwing away superstition and making a real search after truth, the test of truth became, "What does the West say?" The priests must go, the Vedas must be burned, because the West has said so. Out of the feeling of unrest thus produced, there arose a wave of so-called reform in India.

If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are necessary. The first is to feel. Do you really feel for your brothers? Do you really feel that there is so much misery in the world, so much ignorance and superstition? Do you really feel that men are your brothers? Does this idea come into your whole being? Does it run with your blood? Does it tingle in your veins? Does it course through every nerve and filament of your body? Are you full of that idea of sympathy? If you are, that is only the first step. You must think next if you have found any

remedy The old ideas may be all superstition, but in and round these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth Have you discovered means by which to keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? If you have done that, that is only the second step, one more thing is necessary What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame, or power? Are you really sure that you can stand to your ideals, and work on, even if the whole world wants to crush you down? Are you sure you know what you want, and will perform your duty, and that alone, even if your life is at stake? Are you sure that you will persevere so long as life endures, so long as there is one pulsation left in the heart? Then you are a real reformer, you are a teacher, a Master, a blessing to mankind But man is so impatient, so short-sighted! He has not the patience to wait, he has not the power to see He wants to rule, he wants results immediately Why? He wants to reap the fruits himself, and does not really care for others Duty for duty's sake is not what he wants "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof," says Krishna Why cling to results? Ours are the duties Let the fruits take care of themselves But man has no patience He takes up any scheme The larger number of would-be reformers all over the world can be classed under this heading

As I have said, the idea of reform came to India when it seemed as if the wave of materialism that had invaded her shores would sweep away the teachings of the sages But the nation had borne the shocks of a thousand such waves of change This one was mild in comparison Wave after wave had flooded the land, breaking and crushing everything for hundreds of years The sword had flashed, and "Victory unto Allah" had rent the skies of India, but these floods subsided, leaving the national ideals unchanged

The Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless it stands, and it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up their spirituality. Beggars they may remain, poor and poverty-stricken, dirt and squalor may surround them perhaps throughout all time, but let them not give up their God, let them not forget that they are the children of the sages. Just as in the West, even the man in the street wants to trace his descent from some robber-baron of the Middle Ages, so in India, even an Emperor on the throne wants to trace his descent from some beggar-sage in the forest, from a man who wore the bark of a tree, lived upon the fruits of the forest and communed with God. That is the type of descent we want, and so long as holiness is thus supremely venerated, India cannot die.

Many of you perhaps have read the article by Prof. Max Muller in a recent issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, headed "A Real Mahâtman." The life of Sri Ramakrishna is interesting, as it was a living illustration of the ideas that he preached. Perhaps it will be a little romantic for you who live in the West, in an atmosphere entirely different from that of India. For the methods and manners in the busy rush of life in the West vary entirely from those of India. Yet perhaps it will be of all the more interest for that, because it will bring into a newer light, things about which many have already heard.

It was while reforms of various kinds were being inaugurated in India that a child was born of poor Brâhman parents on the eighteenth of February, 1836, in one of the remote villages of Bengal. The father and mother were very orthodox people. The life of a really orthodox Brahman is one of continuous renunciation. Very few things can he do, and over and beyond them the orthodox Brahman must not occupy himself with any secular business. At the same time he must not receive gifts from everybody. You may imagine how rigorous that life

becomes You have heard of the Brahmans and their priestcraft many times, but very few of you have ever stopped to ask what makes this wonderful band of men the rulers of their fellows. They are the poorest of all the classes in the country, and the secret of their power lies in their renunciation. They never covet wealth. Theirs is the poorest priesthood in the world, and therefore the most powerful. Even in this poverty, a Brahman's wife will never allow a poor man to pass through the village without giving him something to eat. That is considered the highest duty of the mother in India, and because she is the mother it is her duty to be served last; she must see that every one is served before her turn comes. That is why the mother is regarded as God in India. This particular woman, the mother of our subject, was the very type of a Hindu mother. The higher the caste, the greater the restrictions. The lowest caste people can eat and drink anything they like, but as men rise in the social scale, more and more restrictions come, and when they reach the highest caste, the Brahman, the hereditary priesthood of India, their lives, as I have said, are very much circumscribed. Compared to Western manners, their lives are of continuous asceticism. The Hindus are perhaps the most exclusive nation in the world. They have the same great steadiness as the English, but much more amplified. When they get hold of an idea they carry it out to its very conclusion, and they keep hold of it generation after generation until they make something out of it. Once give them an idea and it is not easy to take it back, but it is hard to make them grasp a new idea.

The orthodox Hindus therefore are very exclusive, living entirely within their own horizon of thought and feeling. Their lives are laid down in our old books in every little detail, and the least detail is grasped with almost adamant firmness by them. They would starve

rather than eat a meal cooked by the hands of a man not belonging to their own small section of caste. But withal, they have intensity and tremendous earnestness. That force of intense faith and religious life occurs often among the orthodox Hindus, because their very orthodoxy comes from a tremendous conviction that it is right. We may not all think that what they hold on to with such perseverance is right, but to them it is. Now, it is written in our books that a man should always be charitable even to the extreme. If a man starves himself to death to help another man, to save that man's life, it is all right ; it is even held that a man ought to do that. And it is expected of a Brahman to carry this idea out to the very extreme. Those who are acquainted with the literature of India will remember a beautiful old story about this extreme charity, how a whole family, as related in the Mahâbhârata, starved themselves to death and gave their last meal to a beggar. This is not an exaggeration, for such things still happen. The character of the father and the mother of my Master was very much like that. Very poor they were, and yet many a time the mother would starve herself a whole day to help a poor man. Of them this child was born, and he was a peculiar child from very boyhood. He remembered his past from his birth, and was conscious for what purpose he came into the world, and every power was devoted to the fulfilment of that purpose.

While he was quite young his father died and the boy was sent to school. A Brahman's boy must go to school ; the caste restricts him to a learned profession only. The old system of education in India, still prevalent in many parts of the country, especially in connection with Sannyâsins, is very different from the modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge must be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without charge, and not only so, most of

them gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers the wealthy families on certain occasions, such as a marriage festival, or at the ceremonies for the dead, made gifts to them. They were considered the first and foremost claimants to certain gifts, and they in their turn had to maintain their students. So whenever there is a marriage, especially in a rich family, these professors are invited, and they attend and discuss various subjects. This boy went to one of these gatherings of professors, and the professors were discussing various topics, such as logic or astronomy, subjects much beyond his age. The boy was peculiar, as I have said, and he gathered this moral out of it,—that this is the outcome of all their knowledge. Why are they fighting so hard? It is simply for money, the man who can show the highest learning here will get the best pair of cloth, and that is all these people are struggling for. I will not go to school any more. And he did not—that was the end of his going to school. But this boy had an elder brother, a learned professor, who took him to Calcutta, however, to study with him. After a short time the boy became fully convinced that the aim of all secular learning was mere material advancement, and nothing more, and he resolved to give up study and devote himself solely to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. The father being dead, the family was very poor, and this boy had to make his own living. He went to a place near Calcutta and became a temple priest. To become a temple priest is thought very degrading to a Brahman. Our temples are not churches in your sense of the word, they are not places for public worship, for, properly speaking, there is no such thing as public worship in India. Temples are erected mostly by rich persons as a meritorious religious act.

If a man has much property he wants to build a temple. In that, he puts a symbol or an image of an Incarnation of God, and dedicates it to worship in the name



of God The worship is akin to that which is conducted in Roman Catholic churches, very much like the Mass, reading certain sentences from the Sacred Books, waving a light before the image, and treating the image in every respect as we treat a great man This is all that is done in the temple The man who goes to a temple is not considered thereby a better man than he who never goes More properly, the latter is considered the more religious man, for religion in India is to each man his own private affair In the house of every man there is either a little chapel, or a room set apart, and there he goes morning and evening, sits down in a corner, and there does his worship. And this worship is entirely mental, for another man does not hear or know what he is doing He sees him only sitting there, and perhaps moving his fingers in a peculiar fashion, or closing his nostrils and breathing in a peculiar manner Beyond that, he does not know what his brother is doing ; even his wife, perhaps, will not know Thus, all worship is conducted in the privacy of his own home Those who cannot afford to have a chapel go to the banks of a river, or a lake, or the sea if they live at the seaside, but people sometimes go to worship in a temple by making salutation to the image There their duty to the temple ends Therefore, you see, it has been held from the most ancient times in our country, legislated upon by Manu, that it is a degenerating occupation to become a temple priest Some of the books say it is so degrading as to make a Brahman worthy of reproach. There is another idea behind it, that, just as with education, but in a far more intense sense with religion, the fact that temple priests take fees for their work is making merchandise of sacred things So you may imagine the feelings of that boy when he was forced through poverty to take up the only occupation open to him, that of a temple priest

There have been various poets in Bengal whose songs have passed down to the people ; they are sung in the

streets of Calcutta and in every village Most of these are religious songs, and their one central idea, which is perhaps peculiar to the religions of India, is the idea of realisation There is not a book in India on religion which does not breathe this idea Man must realise God, feel God, see God, talk to God That is religion. The Indian atmosphere is full of stories of saintly persons having visions of God Such doctrines form the basis of the religion, and all these ancient books and Scriptures are the writings of persons who came into direct contact with spiritual facts These books were not written for the intellect, nor can any reasoning understand them, because they were written by men who saw the things of which they wrote, and they can be understood only by men who have raised themselves to the same height They say there is such a thing as realisation even in this life, and it is open to every one, and religion begins with the opening of this faculty, if I may call it so This is the central idea in all religions and this is why we may find one man with the most finished oratorical powers, or the most convincing logic, preaching the highest doctrines and yet unable to get people to listen to him, while we may find another, a poor man, who scarcely can speak the language of his own motherland, yet half the nation worships him in his own lifetime as God When in India the idea somehow or other gets abroad that a man has raised himself to that state of realisation, that religion is no more a matter of conjecture to him, that he is no more groping in the dark in such momentous questions as religion, the immortality of the soul, and God, people come from all quarters to see him and gradually they begin to worship him

In the temple was an image of the "Blissful Mother " This boy had to conduct the worship morning and evening, and by degrees this one idea filled his mind—"Is there anything behind this image? Is it true that there is a Mother of Bliss in the universe? Is it true that She lives

and guides this universe, or is it all a dream? Is there any reality in religion?"

This scepticism comes to the Hindu child. It is the scepticism of our country—is this that we are doing real? And theories will not satisfy us, although there are ready at hand almost all the theories that have ever been made with regard to God and soul. Neither books nor theories can satisfy us, the one idea that gets hold of thousands of our people is this idea of realisation. Is it true that there is a God? If it be true, can I see Him? Can I realise the truth? The Western mind may think all this very impracticable, but to us it is intensely practical. For this idea men will give up their lives. You have just heard how from the earliest times there have been persons who have given up all comforts and luxuries to live in caves, and hundreds have given up their homes to weep bitter tears of misery on the banks of sacred rivers, in order to realise this idea, not to know, in the ordinary sense of the word, not intellectual understanding, not a mere rationalistic comprehension of the real thing, not mere groping in the dark, but intense realisation, much more real than this world is to our senses. That is the idea. I do not advance any proposition as to that just now, but that is the one fact that is impressed upon them. Thousands will be killed, other thousands will be ready. So upon this one idea the whole nation for thousands of years have been denying and sacrificing themselves. For this idea thousands of Hindus every year give up their homes and many of them die through the hardships they have to undergo. To the Western mind this must seem most visionary, and I can see the reason for this point of view. But though I have resided in the West, I still think this idea the most practical thing in life.

Every moment I think of anything else is so much loss to me, even the marvels of earthly sciences; everything is vain if it takes me away from that thought. Life

is but momentary, whether you have the knowledge of an angel, or the ignorance of an animal Life is but momentary, whether you have the poverty of the poorest man in rags, or the wealth of the richest living person Life is but momentary, whether you are a down-trodden man living in one of the big streets of the big cities of the West, or a crowned Emperor ruling over millions Life is but momentary, whether you have the best of health or the worst Life is but momentary, whether you have the most poetical temperament or the most cruel There is but one solution of life, says the Hindu, and that solution is what they call God and religion. If these be true, life becomes explained, life becomes bearable, becomes enjoyable Otherwise, life is but a useless burden That is our idea, but no amount of reasoning can demonstrate it ; it can only make it probable, and there it rests The highest demonstration of reasoning that we have in any branch of knowledge can only make a fact probable, and nothing further The most demonstrable facts of physical science are only probabilities, not facts yet Facts are only in the senses Facts have to be perceived and we have to perceive religion to demonstrate it to ourselves We have to sense God to be convinced that there is a God We must sense the facts of religion to know that they are facts Nothing else, and no amount of reasoning, but our own perceptions can make these things real to us, can make my belief firm as a rock That is my idea, and that is the Indian idea

This idea took possession of the boy and his whole life became concentrated upon that Day after day he would weep and say "Mother, is it true that Thou existest, or is it all poetry ? Is the Blissful Mother an imagination of poets and misguided people, or is there such a Reality ?" We have seen that of books, of education in our sense of the word, he had none, and so much the more natural, so much the more healthy, was his mind, so

much the purer his thoughts, undiluted by drinking in the thoughts of others. Because he did not go to the university, therefore he thought for himself. Because we have spent half our lives in the university we are filled with a collection of other people's thoughts. Well has Prof. Max Muller said in the article I have just referred to that this was a clean, original man and the secret of that originality was that he was not brought up within the precincts of a university. However, this thought—whether God can be seen—which was uppermost in his mind gained in strength every day until he could think of nothing else. He could no more conduct the worship properly, could no more attend to the various details in all their minuteness. Often he would forget to place the food-offering before the image, sometimes he would forget to wave the light, at other times he would wave it for hours, and forget everything else.

And that one idea was in his mind every day—"Is it true that Thou existest, O Mother? Why dost Thou not speak? Art Thou dead?" Perhaps some of us here will remember that there are moments in our lives when, tired of all these ratiocinations of dull and dead logic, tired of plodding through books—which after all teach us nothing, become nothing but a sort of intellectual opium-eating—we must have it at stated times or we die—tired with all this, the heart of our hearts sends out a wail. "Is there no one in this universe who can show me the light? If Thou art, show the light unto me. Why dost Thou not speak? Why dost Thou make Thyself so scarce, why send so many Messengers and not Thyself come to me? In this world of fights and factions whom am I to follow and believe? If Thou art the God of every man and woman alike, why comest Thou not to speak to Thy child and see if he is not ready?" Well, to us all come such thoughts in moments of great depression; but such are the temptations surrounding us, that the next moment we

forget For the moment it seemed that the doors of the heavens were going to be opened, for the moment it seemed as if we were going to plunge into the light effulgent, but the animal man again shakes off all these angelic visions Down we go, animal man once more, eating and drinking and dying, and dying and drinking and eating again and again But there are exceptional minds which are not turned away so easily, which once attracted can never be turned back, whatever may be the temptation in the way, which want to see the Truth, knowing that life must go They say, let it go in a noble conquest, and what conquest is nobler than the conquest of the lower man, than this solution of the problem of life and death; of good and evil?

At last it became impossible for him to serve in the temple He left it and entered into a little wood that was near and lived there About this part of his life, he told me many times that he could not tell when the sun rose or set, or how he lived He lost all thought of himself and forgot to eat During this period he was lovingly watched over by a relative who put into his mouth food which he mechanically swallowed

Days and nights thus passed with the boy. When a whole day would pass, towards the evening, when the peal of bells in the temples, and the voices singing, would reach the wood, it would make the boy very sad, and he would cry. "Another day is gone in vain, Mother, and Thou hast not come Another day of this short life has gone and I have not known the Truth" In the agony of his soul, sometimes he would rub his face against the ground and weep, and this one prayer burst forth. "Do Thou manifest Thyself in me, Thou Mother of the Universe! See that I need Thee, and nothing else!" Verily, he wanted to be true to his own ideal He had heard that the Mother never came until everything had been given up for Her. He had heard that the Mother wanted to come to everyone, but

they would not have Her, that people wanted all sorts of foolish little idols to pray to, that they wanted their own enjoyments, and not the Mother, and that the moment they really wanted Her with their whole soul, and nothing else, that moment She would come. So he began to break himself into that idea, he wanted to be exact, even on the plane of matter. He threw away all the little property he had, and took a vow that he would never touch money, and this one idea, "I will not touch money," became a part of him. It may appear to be something occult, but even in after-life, when he was sleeping, if I touched him with a piece of money his hand would become bent, and his whole body would become, as it were, paralysed. The other idea that came into his mind was that lust was the other enemy. Man is a soul, and soul is sexless, neither man nor woman. The idea of sex and the idea of money were the two things, he thought, that prevented him from seeing the Mother. This whole universe is the manifestation of the Mother, and She lives in every woman's body. "Every woman represents the Mother, how can I think of woman in mere sex relation?" That was the idea. Every woman was his Mother, he must bring himself to the state when he would see nothing but Mother in every woman; and he carried it out in his life.

This is the tremendous thirst that seizes the human heart. Later on, this very man said to me. "My child, suppose there is a bag of gold in one room, and a robber in the next room; do you think that robber can sleep? He cannot. His mind will be always thinking how to get into that room and obtain possession of that gold. Do you think then that a man firmly persuaded that there is a Reality behind all these appearances, that there is a God, that there is One who never dies, One who is infinite bliss, a bliss compared with which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can rest contented without struggling to attain It? Can he cease his efforts for a moment? No.

He will become mad with longing " This divine madness seized the boy At that time he had no teacher, nobody to tell him anything, and every one thought that he was out of his mind This is the ordinary condition of things. If a man throws aside the vanities of the world we hear him called mad, but such men are the salt of the earth Out of such madness have come the powers that have moved this world of ours, and out of such madness alone will come the powers of the future, that are going to move the world

So days, weeks, months passed in continuous struggle of the soul to arrive at Truth The boy began to see visions, to see wonderful things, the secrets of his nature were beginning to open to him Veil after veil was, as it were, being taken off Mother Herself became the teacher, and initiated the boy into the truths he sought. At this time there came to this place a woman, of beautiful appearance, learned beyond compare "Later on, this Saint used to say about her that she was not learned, but was the embodiment of learning she was learning itself, in human form There, too, you find the peculiarity of the Indian nation In the midst of the ignorance in which the average Hindu woman lives, in the midst of what is called in Western countries her lack of freedom, there could arise a woman of supreme spirituality She was a Sannyâsini, for women also give up the world, throw away their property, do not marry, and devote themselves to the worship of the Lord She came, and when she heard of this boy in the grove she offered to go and see him, and hers was the first help he received At once she recognised what his trouble was, and she said to him "My son, blessed is the man upon whom such madness comes The whole of this universe is mad, some for wealth, some for pleasure, some for fame, some for a hundred other things They are mad for gold, or husbands, or wives, for little trifles, mad to tyrannise over somebody, mad to become



rich, mad for every foolish thing except God. And they can understand only their own madness. When another man is mad after gold they have fellow-feeling and sympathy for him, and they say he is the right man, as lunatics think that lunatics alone are sane. But if a man is mad after the Beloved, after the Lord, how can they understand? They think he has gone crazy, and they say, 'Have nothing to do with him.' That is why they call you mad, but yours is the right kind of madness. Blessed is the man who is mad after God. Such men are very few." This woman remained near the boy for years, taught him the forms of the religions of India, initiated him into the different practices of Yoga, and, as it were, guided and brought into harmony this tremendous river of spirituality.

Later, there came to the same grove a Sannyâsin, one of the begging friars of India, a learned man, a philosopher. He was a peculiar man, he was an idealist. He did not believe that this world existed in reality, and to demonstrate that, he would never go under a roof, he would always live out of doors, in storm and sunshine alike. This man began to teach the boy the philosophy of the Vedas, and he found very soon, to his astonishment, that the pupil was in some respects wiser than the master. He spent several months with the boy, after which he initiated him into the order of Sannyasins, and took his departure.

When as a temple priest his extraordinary worship made people think him deranged in his head, his relatives took him home and married him to a little girl, thinking that that would turn his thoughts and restore the balance of his mind. But he came back and as we have seen, merged deeper in his madness. Sometimes, in our country, boys are married as children and have no voice in the matter, their parents marry them. Of course such a marriage is little more than a betrothal. When they are married they still continue to live with their parents, and

the real marriage takes place when the wife grows older, when it is customary for the husband to go and bring his bride to his own home. In this case, however, the husband had entirely forgotten that he had a wife. In her far off home the girl had heard that her husband had become a religious enthusiast, and that he was even considered insane by many. She resolved to learn the truth for herself, so she set out and walked to the place where her husband was. When at last she stood in her husband's presence, he at once admitted her right to his life, although in India any person, man or woman, who embraces a religious life, is thereby freed from all other obligations. The young man fell at the feet of his wife and said "As for me, the Mother has shown me that She resides in every woman, and so I have learned to look upon every woman as Mother. That is the one idea I can have about you, but if you wish to draw me into the world, as I have been married to you, I am at your service."

The maiden was a pure and noble soul, and was able to understand her husband's aspirations and sympathise with them. She quickly told him that she had no wish to drag him down to a life of worldliness, but that all she desired was to remain near him, to serve him and to learn of him. She became one of his most devoted disciples, always revering him as a divine being. Thus through his wife's consent the last barrier was removed and he was free to lead the life he had chosen.

The next desire that seized upon the soul of this man was to know the truth about the various religions. Up to that time he had not known any religion but his own. He wanted to understand what other religions were like. So, he sought teachers of other religions. By teachers you must always remember what we mean in India, not a book-worm, but a man of realisation, one who knows truth at first-hand and not through an intermediary. He found a Mohammedan saint and went to live with him; he

underwent the disciplines prescribed by him, and to his astonishment found that when faithfully carried out, these devotional methods led him to the same goal he had already attained. He gathered similar experience from following the true religion of Jesus the Christ. He went to all the sects he could find, and whatever he took up he went into with his whole heart. He did exactly as he was told, and in every instance he arrived at the same result. Thus from actual experience, he came to know that the goal of every religion is the same, that each is trying to teach the same thing, the difference being largely in method, and still more in language. At the core, all sects and all religions have the same aim, and they were only quarrelling for their own selfish purposes, they were not anxious about the truth, but about "my name" and "your name." Two of them preached the same truth, but one of them said, "That cannot be true, because I have not put upon it the seal of my name. Therefore do not listen to him." And the other man said, "Do not hear him, although he is preaching very much the same thing, yet it is not true because he does not preach it in my name."

That is what my Master found, and he then set about to learn humility, because he had found that the one idea in all religions is, "not me, but Thou," and he who says, "not me," the Lord fills his heart. The less of this little "I" the more of God there is in him. That he found to be the truth in every religion in the world, and he set himself to accomplish this. As I have told you, whenever he wanted to do anything he never confined himself to fine theories, but would enter into the practice immediately. We see many persons talking the most wonderfully fine things about charity and about equality and the rights of other people and all that, but it is only in theory. I was so fortunate as to find one who was able to carry theory into practice. He had the most wonderful faculty of carrying everything into practice which he thought was right.

Now, there was a family of Pariahs living near the place. The Pariahs number several millions in the whole of India, and are a sect of people so low that some of our books say that if a Brahman coming out from his house sees the face of a Pariah, he has to fast that day and recite certain prayers, before he becomes holy again. In some Hindu cities when a Pariah enters, he has to put a crow's feather on his head, as a sign that he is a Pariah, and he has to cry aloud, "Save yourselves, the Pariah is passing through the street," and you will find people flying off from him as if by magic, because if they touch him by chance, they will have to change their clothes, bathe, and do other things. And the Pariah for thousands of years has believed that it is perfectly right, that his touch will make everybody unholy. Now, my Master would go to a Pariah and ask to be allowed to clean his house. The business of the Pariah is to clean the streets of the cities, and to keep houses clean. He cannot enter the house by the front door, by the back door he enters, and as soon as he has gone the whole place over which he has passed is sprinkled with and made holy by a little Ganges water. By birth the Brahman stands for holiness, and the Pariah for the very reverse. And this Brahman asked to be allowed to do the menial services in the house of the Pariah. The Pariah of course could not allow that, for they all think that if they allow a Brahman to do such menial work it will be an awful sin, and they will become extinct. The Pariah would not permit it, so in the dead of night, when all were sleeping, Ramakrishna would enter the house. He had long hair, and with his hair he would wipe the place, saying, "Oh, my Mother, make me the servant of the Pariah, make me feel that I am even lower than the Pariah." "They worship Me best, who worship My worshippers. These are all My children and your privilege is to serve them"—is the teaching of Hindu Scriptures.

There were various other preparations, which would

take a long time to relate, and I want to give you just a sketch of his life. For years he thus educated himself. One of the Sâdhanâs was to root out the sex idea. Soul has no sex, it is neither male nor female. It is only in the body that sex exists, and the man who desires to reach the Spirit cannot at the same time hold to sex distinctions. Having been born in a masculine body, this man wanted to bring the feminine idea into everything. He began to think that he was a woman, he dressed like a woman, spoke like a woman, gave up the occupations of men, and lived in the household among the women of a good family, until, after years of this discipline, his mind became changed, and he entirely forgot the idea of sex, thus the whole view of life became changed to him.

We hear in the West about worshipping woman, but this is usually for her youth and beauty. This man meant by worshipping woman, that to him every woman's face was that of the Blissful Mother, and nothing but that. I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch, and falling at their feet bathed in tears, saying "Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, and in another form Thou art the universe. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee." Think of the blessedness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, which can look upon every woman with that love and reverence, when every woman's face becomes transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race, shines upon it! That is what we want. Do you mean to say that the divinity back of woman can ever be cheated? It never was and never will be. It always asserts itself. Unfailingly it detects fraud, it detects hypocrisy, unerringly it feels the warmth of truth, the light of spirituality, the holiness of purity. Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be attained.

This rigorous, unsullied purity came into the life of that man. All the struggles which we have in our lives were past for him. His hard-earned jewels of spirituality, for which he had given three-quarters of his life, were now ready to be given to humanity, and then began his mission. His teaching and preaching were peculiar. In our country a teacher is a most highly venerated person, he is regarded as God Himself. We have not even the same respect for our father and mother. Father and mother give us our body, but the teacher shows us the way to salvation. We are his children, we are born in the spiritual line of the teacher. All Hindus come to pay respect to an extraordinary teacher, they crowd around him. And here was such a teacher, but the teacher had no thought whether he was to be respected or not, he had not the least idea that he was a great teacher, he thought that it was Mother who was doing everything and not he. He always said "If any good comes from my lips, it is the Mother who speaks, what have I to do with it?" That was his one idea about his work, and to the day of his death he never gave it up. This man sought no one. His principle was, first form character, first earn spirituality, and results will come of themselves. His favourite illustration was, "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey, so let the lotus of your character be full-blown and the results will follow." This is a great lesson to learn.

My Master taught me this lesson hundreds of times, yet I often forget it. Few understand the power of thought. If a man goes into a cave, shuts himself in, and thinks one really great thought and dies, that thought will penetrate the walls of that cave, vibrate through space, and at last permeate the whole human race. Such is the power of thought, be in no hurry therefore to give your thoughts to others. First have something to give. He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is

not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense. This idea is very old in India and finds illustration in the West in the theory, in the belief, of apostolic succession. Therefore, first make character—that is the highest duty you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can teach it afterwards, they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master. He criticised no one. For years I lived with that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of condemnation for any sect. He had the same sympathy for all sects; he had found the harmony between them. A man may be intellectual, or devotional, or mystic, or active; the various religions represent one or the other of these types. Yet it is possible to combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is going to do. That was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the good in all.

People came by thousands to see and hear this wonderful man, who spoke in a *patois*, every word of which was forceful and instinct with light. For it is not what is spoken, much less the language in which it is spoken, but it is the personality of the speaker which dwells in everything he says that carries weight. Every one of us feels this at times. We hear most splendid orations, most wonderfully reasoned-out discourses, and we go home and forget them all. At other times we hear a few words in the simplest language, and they enter into our lives, become part and parcel of ourselves and produce lasting results. The words of a man who can put his personality into them, take effect, but he must have tremendous personality. All teaching implies giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have something to give, and the other must be open to receive.

This man came to live near Calcutta, the capital of India, the most important university town in our country, which was sending out sceptics and materialists by the hundreds every year, yet many of these university men, sceptics, and agnostics, used to come and listen to him. I heard of this man, and I went to hear him. He looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He used the most simple language, and I thought, "Can this man be a great teacher?"—crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life. "Do you believe in God, Sir?" "Yes," he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir?" "Yes." "How?" "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense." That impressed me at once. For the first time I found a man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality, to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world. I began to go to that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can change a whole life. I have read about Buddha and Christ and Mahomed, about all those different luminaries of ancient times, how they would stand up and say, "Be thou whole," and the man became whole. I now found it to be true, and when I myself saw this man, all scepticism was brushed aside. It could be done, and my Master used to say "Religion can be given and taken more tangibly, more really than anything else in the world." Be therefore spiritual first; have something to give, and then stand before the world and give it. Religion is not talk, or doctrines or theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the relation between the soul and God, how can it be made into a society? It would then degenerate into business, and wherever there are business and business principles in religion, spirituality dies. Religion does not consist in erecting temples, or building churches, or attending public worship. It is not



to be found in books, or in words, or in lectures, or in organisations. Religion consists in realisation. As a fact, we all know that nothing will satisfy us until we know the truth for ourselves. However we may argue, however much we may hear, but one thing will satisfy us, and that is our own realisation, and such an experience is possible for every one of us, if we will only try. The first ideal of this attempt to realise religion is that of renunciation. As far as we can, we must give up. Darkness and light, enjoyment of the world and enjoyment of God, will never go together. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Let people try it if they will, and I have seen millions in every country who have tried; but after all, it comes to nothing. If one word remains true in the saying, it is, give up everything for the sake of the Lord. This is a hard and long task, but you can begin it here and now. Bit by bit we must go towards it.

The second idea that I learned from my Master, and which is perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of One Eternal Religion. That One Eternal Religion is applied to different planes of existence, is applied to the opinions of various minds and various races. There never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion; there never existed many religions, there is only the one. One Infinite Religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this Religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways. Therefore we must respect all religions and we must try to accept them all as far as we can. Religions manifest themselves not only according to race and geographical position, but according to individual powers. In one man, religion is manifesting itself as intense activity, as work. In another, it is manifesting itself as intense devotion, in yet another, as mysticism, in others as philosophy, and so forth. It is

wrong when we say to others. "Your methods are not right.", Perhaps a man, whose nature is that of love, thinks that the man who does good to others is not on the right road to religion, because it is not his own way, and is therefore wrong. If the philosopher thinks, "Oh, the poor ignorant people, what do they know about a God of Love, and loving Him; they do not know what they mean," he is wrong, because they may be right and he also.

To learn this central secret that the Truth may be one and yet many at the same time, that we may have different visions of the same Truth from different stand-points, is exactly what must be done. Then, instead of antagonism to any one, we shall have infinite sympathy with all. Knowing that as long as there are different natures born in this world, the same religious truth will require different adaptations, we shall understand that we are bound to have forbearance with each other. Just as nature is unity in variety—an infinite variation in the phenomenal, that in and through all these variations of the phenomenal runs the Infinite, the Unchangeable, the Absolute Unity—so it is with every man, the microcosm is but a miniature repetition of the macrocosm, in spite of all these variations, in and through them all runs this eternal harmony, and we have to recognise this. This idea, above all other ideas, I find to be the crying necessity of the day. Coming from a country which is a hotbed of religious sects—and to which, through its good fortune or ill fortune, every one who has a religious idea wants to send an advance-guard—I have been acquainted from my childhood with the various sects of the world. Even the Mormons come to preach in India. Welcome them all! That is the soil on which to preach religion. There it takes root more than in any other country. If you come and teach politics to the Hindus they do not understand, but if you come to preach religion, however curious it

may be, you will have hundreds and thousands of followers in no time, and you have every chance of becoming a living God in your lifetime. I am glad it is so, it is the one thing we want in India.

The sects among the Hindus are various, a great many in number, and some of them apparently hopelessly contradictory. Yet they all tell you they are but different manifestations of Religion. "As different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running crooked or straight, all come and mingle their waters in the ocean, so the different sects, with their different points of view, at last all come unto Thee." This is not a theory, it has to be recognised, but not in that patronising way which we see with some people, "Oh yes, there are some very good things in it. These are what we call the ethnical religions. These ethnical religions have some good in them." Some even have the most wonderfully liberal idea that other religions are all little bits of a prehistoric evolution, but "ours is the fulfilment of things." One man says because his is the oldest religion, it is the best; another makes the same claim because his is the latest. We have to recognise that each one of them has the same saving power as the other. What you have heard about their difference, whether in the temple or in the church, is a mass of superstition. The same God answers all, and it is not you, or I, or any body of men, that is responsible for the safety and salvation of the least little bit of the soul, the same Almighty God is responsible for all. I do not understand how people declare themselves to be believers in God, and at the same time think that God has handed over to a little body of men all truth, and that they are the guardians of the rest of humanity. How can you call that religion? Religion is realisation, but mere talk, mere trying to believe, mere groping in darkness, mere parroting the words of ancestors, and thinking it is religion, mere making a political something out of the

truths of religion, is not religion at all

In every sect—even among the Mohammedans whom we always regard as the most exclusive—even among them we find that wherever there was a man trying to realise religion, from his lips have come the fiery words, “Thou art the Lord of all. Thou art in the heart of all, Thou art the guide of all, Thou art the Teacher of all, and Thou carest infinitely more for the land of Thy children than we can ever do.” Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better, if you can, get hold of a man where he stands and give him a push upwards, do so, but do not destroy what he has. The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment’s notice. The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through the student’s eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else. All these negative, breaking-down, destructive teachers that are in the world, can never do any good.

In the presence of my Master I found out that man could be perfect, even in this body. Those lips never cursed any one, never even criticised any one. Those eyes were beyond the possibility of seeing evil, that mind had lost the power of thinking evil. He saw nothing but good. That tremendous purity, that tremendous renunciation is the one secret of spirituality. “Neither through wealth, nor through progeny, but through renunciation alone, is immortality to be reached,” say the Vedas. “Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and follow Me,” says the Christ. So all great Saints and Prophets have expressed it, and have carried it out in their lives. How can great spirituality come without that renunciation? Renunciation is the background of all religious thought wherever it be, and you will always find that as this idea

of renunciation lessens, the more will the senses creep into the field of religion, and spirituality will decrease in the same ratio

That man was the embodiment of renunciation. In our country it is necessary for a man who becomes a Sannyasin to give up all worldly wealth and position, and this my Master carried out literally. There were many who would have felt themselves blest if he would only have accepted a present from their hands, who would gladly have given him thousands of rupees if he would have taken them, but these were the only men from whom he would turn away. He was a triumphant example, a living realisation of the complete conquest of lust, and of desire for money. He was beyond all ideas of either, and such men are necessary for this century. Such renunciation is necessary in these days when men have begun to think that they cannot live a month without what they call their "necessities," and which they are increasing out of all proportion. It is necessary in a time like this that a man should arise to demonstrate to the sceptics of the world that there yet breathes a man who does not care a straw for all the gold or all the fame that is in the universe. Yet there are such men

The other idea of his life was intense love for others. The first part of my Master's life was spent in acquiring spirituality, and the remaining years in distributing it. People in our country have not the same customs as you have in visiting a religious teacher, or a Sannyasin. Somebody would come to ask him about something, some perhaps would come hundreds of miles, walking all the way, just to ask one question, to hear one word from him. "Tell me one word for my salvation." That is the way they come. They come in numbers, unceremoniously, to the place where he is mostly to be found; they may find him under a tree, and question him, and before one set of people has gone, others have arrived. So, if a man is

greatly revered, he will sometimes have no rest day or night. He will have to talk constantly. For hours, people will come pouring in, and this man will be teaching them.

So men came in crowds to hear him, and he would talk twenty hours in the twenty-four, and that not for one day, but for months and months, until at last the body broke down under the pressure of this tremendous strain. His intense love for mankind would not let him refuse to help even the humblest of the thousands who sought his aid. Gradually there developed a vital throat disorder, and yet he could not be persuaded to refrain from these exertions. As soon as he heard that people were asking to see him, he would insist upon having them admitted, and would answer all their questions. When expostulated with, he replied, "I do not care. I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man." There was no rest for him. Once a man asked him. "Sir, you are a great Yogi. Why do you not put your mind a little on your body and cure your disease?" At first he did not answer, but when the question had been repeated, he gently said: "My friend, I thought you were a sage, but you talk like other men of the world. This mind has been given to the Lord. Do you mean to say that I should take it back and put it upon the body, which is but a mere cage of the soul?"

So he went on preaching to the people, and the news spread that his body was about to pass away, and the people began to flock to him in greater crowds than ever. You cannot imagine the way they come to these great religious teachers in India, how they crowd round them and make gods of them while they are yet living. Thousands wait simply to touch the hem of their garments. It is through this appreciation of spirituality in others that spirituality is produced. Whatever man wants and appreciates, he will get, and it is the same with nations. If you go to India and deliver a political lecture, however grand

it may be, you will scarcely find people to listen to you, but just go and teach religion, *live* it, not merely talk it, and hundreds will crowd just to look at you, to touch your feet. When the people heard that this holy man was likely to go from them soon, they began to come round him more than ever, and my Master went on teaching them without the least regard for his health. We could not prevent this. Many of the people came from long distances, and he would not rest until he had answered their questions. "While I can speak I must teach them," he would say, and he was as good as his word. One day, he told us that he would lay down the body that day, and repeating the most sacred word of the Vedas he entered into Samâdhi and passed away.

His thoughts and his Message were known to very few capable of giving them out. Among others, he left a few young boys who had renounced the world, and were ready to carry on his work. Attempts were made to crush them. But they stood firm, having the inspiration of that great life before them. Having had the contact of that blessed life for years, they stood their ground. These young men, living as Sannyasins, begged through the streets of the city where they were born, although some of them came from high families. At first they met with great antagonism, but they persevered and went on from day to day spreading all over India the Message of that great man, until the whole country was filled with the ideas he had preached. This man, from a remote village of Bengal, without education, by the sheer force of his own determination, realised the Truth and gave it to others, leaving only a few young boys to keep it alive.

To-day the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is known all over India by its millions of people - Nay, the power of that man has spread beyond India, and if there has ever been a word of truth, a word of spirituality,

that I have spoken anywhere in the world, I owe it to my Master, only the mistakes are mine.

This is the Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches or temples, they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality, and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have felt. Only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light."

The more such men are produced in a country, the more that country will be raised, and that country where such men absolutely do not exist is simply doomed, nothing can save it. Therefore, my Master's message to mankind is, "Be spiritual and realise Truth for yourself." He would have you give up for the sake of your fellow-beings. He would have you cease talking about love for your brother, and set to work to prove your words. The time has come for renunciation, for realisation, and then you will see the harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is no need of any quarrel, and then only will you be ready to help humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions, was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great Teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realised that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the One Eternal Religion.

---



## INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

*(Delivered under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, in the Art Gallery of the Pouch Mansion, Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, U S A.)*

India, although only half the size of the United States, contains a population of over two hundred and ninety millions, and there are three religions which hold sway over them, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist<sup>1</sup> and the Hindu. The adherents of the first mentioned number about sixty millions, of the second, about nine millions, while the last embrace nearly two hundred and six millions. The cardinal features of the Hindu religion are founded on the meditative and speculative philosophy and on the ethical teachings contained in the various books of the Vedas, which assert that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in duration. It never had a beginning, and it never will have an end. Innumerable have been the manifestations of the power of the Spirit in the realm of matter, of the force of the Infinite in the domain of the finite, but the Infinite Spirit Itself is self-existent, eternal and unchangeable. The passage of time makes no mark whatever on the dial of eternity. In its supersensuous region which cannot be comprehended at all by the human understanding, there is no past, and there is no future. The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal. The body is subject to the law of growth and decay; what grows, must of necessity decay. But the indwelling Spirit is related to the infinite and eternal life; it never had a beginning and it never will have an end. One of the chief distinctions between the Hindu and the Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning, at its birth into

<sup>1</sup> Including the Jain

this world, whereas the Hindu religion asserts that the Spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being, and had no more a beginning than God Himself. Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection, when there is no more change.

It has been often asked, if this be so, why is it we do not remember anything of our past lives? This is our explanation. Consciousness is the name of the surface only of the mental ocean, but within its depths are stored up all our experiences, both pleasant and painful. The desire of the human soul is to find out something that is stable. The mind and the body, in fact all the various phenomena of nature, are in a condition of incessant change. But the highest aspiration of our spirit is to find out something that does not change, that has reached a state of permanent perfection. And this is the aspiration of the human soul after the Infinite! The finer our moral and intellectual development, the stronger will become this aspiration after the Eternal that changes not.

The modern Buddhists teach that everything that cannot be known by the five senses is non-existent, and that it is a delusion to suppose that man is an independent entity. The idealists, on the contrary, claim that each individual is an independent entity, and the external world does not exist outside of his mental conception. But the sure solution of this problem is that nature is a mixture of independence and dependence, of reality and idealism. Our mind and bodies are dependent on the external world, and this dependence varies according to the nature of their relation to it, but the indwelling Spirit is free, as God is free, and is able to direct in a greater or lesser degree, according to the state of their development, the movements of our minds and bodies.

Death is but a change of condition. We remain in

the same universe, and are subject to the same laws as before. Those who have passed beyond, and have attained high planes of development in beauty and wisdom, are but the advance-guard of a universal army, who are following after them. The spirit of the highest is related to the spirit of the lowest, and the germ of infinite perfection exists in all. We should cultivate the optimistic temperament, and endeavour to see the good that dwells in everything. If we sit down and lament over the imperfection of our bodies and minds, we profit nothing, it is the heroic endeavour to subdue adverse circumstances that carries our spirits upwards. The object of life is to learn the laws of spiritual progress. Christians can learn from Hindus, and Hindus can learn from Christians. Each has made a contribution of value to the wisdom of the world.

Impress upon your children that true religion is positive, and not negative. That it does not consist in merely refraining from evil, but in a persistent performance of noble deeds. True religion comes not from the teaching of men or the reading of books, it is the awakening of the Spirit within us, consequent upon pure and heroic action. Every child born into the world brings with it a certain accumulated experience from previous incarnations and the impress of this experience is seen in the structure of its mind and body. But the feeling of independence which possesses us all, shows there is something in us besides mind and body. The soul that reigns within is independent, and creates the desire for freedom. If we are not free, how can we hope to make the world better? We hold that human progress is the result of the action of the human Spirit. What the world is, and what we ourselves are, are the fruits of the freedom of the Spirit.

We believe in one God, the Father of us all, who is omnipresent, and omnipotent, and who guides and

preserves His children with infinite love We believe in a Personal God as the Christians do, but we go further we believe that we are He! That His personality is manifested in us, that God is in us, and that we are in God We believe there is a germ of truth in all religions, and the Hindu bows down to them all, for, in this world, truth is to be found not in subtraction but in addition We would offer God a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers of all the diverse faiths We must love God for love's sake, not for the hope of reward We must do our duty for duty's sake, not for the hope of reward We must worship the beautiful for beauty's sake, not for the hope of reward Thus in the purity of our hearts shall we see God Sacrifices, genuflexions, mumblings and mutterings are not religion They are only good if they stimulate us to the brave performance of beautiful and heroic deeds, and lift our thoughts to the apprehension of the divine perfection

What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as our brother? Books are only made so that they may point the way to a higher life, but no good results unless the path is trodden with unflinching steps! Every human personality may be compared to a glass globe There is the same pure white light—an emission of the divine Being—in the centre of each, but the glass being of different colours and thickness, the rays assume diverse aspects in the transmission The equality and beauty of each central flame is the same, and the apparent inequality is only in the imperfection of the temporal instrument of its expression As we rise higher and higher in the scale of being, the medium becomes more and more translucent

---

## THE BASIS FOR PSYCHIC OR SPIRITUAL RESEARCH

It was not often that Swami Vivekananda, while in the West, took part in debates. One such occasion, in London, when he did so, was during the discussion of a lecture on, "Can Psychic Phenomena be proved from a Scientific Basis?" Referring first to a remark which he had heard in the course of this debate, not for the first time in the West, he said:

One point I wanted to remark upon. It is a mistaken statement that has been made to us that the Mohammedans do not believe that women have souls. I am very sorry to say it is an old mistake among Christian people, and they seem to like the mistake. That is a peculiarity in human nature, that people want to say something very bad about others whom they do not like. By the by, you know I am not a Mohammedan, but yet I have had opportunities for studying this religion, and there is not one word in the Koran which says that women have no souls, but in fact it says they have.

About the psychical things that have been the subject of discussion, I have very little to say here, for in the first place, the question is whether psychical subjects are capable of scientific demonstration. What do you mean by this demonstration? First of all, there will be the subjective and the objective side necessary. Taking chemistry and physics, with which we are so familiar, and of which we have read so much, is it true that everyone in this world is able to understand the demonstration even of the commonest subjects? Take any boor and show him one of your experiments, what will he understand of it? Nothing. It requires a good deal of previous training to be

brought up to the point of understanding an experiment. Before that he cannot understand it at all. That is a great difficulty in the way. If scientific demonstration means bringing down certain facts to a plane which is universal for all human beings, where all beings can understand it, I deny that there can be any such scientific demonstration for any subject in the world. If it were so, all our universities and education would be in vain. Why are we educated, if by birth we can understand everything scientific? Why so much study? It is of no use whatsoever. So, on the face of it, it is absurd if this be the meaning of scientific demonstration, the bringing down of intricate facts to the plane on which we are now. The next meaning should be the correct one, perhaps—that certain facts should be adduced as proving certain more intricate facts. There are certain more complicated, intricate phenomena, which we explain by less intricate ones, and thus get, perhaps, nearer to them; in this way they are gradually brought down to the plane of our present ordinary consciousness. But even this is very complicated, and very difficult, and means a training also, a tremendous amount of education. So all I have to say is that in order to have scientific explanation of psychical phenomena, we require not only perfect evidence on the side of the phenomena themselves, but a good deal of training on the part of those who want to see. All this being granted, we shall be in a position to say yea or nay, about the proof or disproof of any phenomena which are presented before us. But, before that, the most remarkable phenomena, or the most oft-recorded phenomena that have happened in human society, in my opinion, would be very hard indeed to prove even in an off-hand manner.

Next, as to those hasty explanations, that religions are the outcome of dreams—those who have made a particular study of them would think of them but as mere guesses.

We have no reason to suppose that religions were the outcome of dreams, as has been so easily explained. Then it would be very easy indeed to take even the agnostic's position, but unfortunately the matter cannot be explained so easily. There are many other wonderful phenomena happening, even at the present time, and these have all to be investigated, and not only have to be, but have been investigated all along. The blind man says there is no sun. That does not prove that there is no sun. These phenomena have been investigated years before. Whole races of mankind have trained themselves for centuries to become fit instruments for discovering the fine workings of the nerves; their records have been published ages ago, colleges have been created to study these subjects, and men and women there are still who are living demonstrations of these phenomena. Of course I admit that there is a good deal of hoax in the whole thing, a good deal of what is wrong and untrue in these things, but with what is this not the case? Take any common scientific phenomenon, there are two or three facts which either scientists or ordinary men may regard as absolute truths, and the rest as mere frothy suppositions. Now let the agnostic apply the same test to his own science which he would apply to what he does not want to believe! Half of it would be shaken to its foundation at once. We are bound to live on suppositions. We cannot live satisfied where we are, that is the natural growth of the human soul. We cannot become agnostics on this side and at the same time go about seeking for anything here, we have to peek. And, for this reason, we have to get beyond our limits, struggle to know what seems to be unknowable, and this struggle must continue.

In my opinion, therefore, I go really one step further than the lecturer, and advance the opinion that most of the psychical phenomena—not only little things, like spirit-rappings, or table-rappings, which are mere child's play,

not merely little things like telepathy, which I have seen boys do even—most of the psychical phenomena which the last speaker calls the higher clairvoyance, but which I would rather beg to call the experiences of the super-conscious state of the mind, are the very stepping-stones to real psychological investigation. The first thing to be seen is whether the mind can attain to that state or not. My explanation would, of course, be a little different from his, but we should probably agree when we explain terms. Not much depends on the question whether this present consciousness continues after death or not, seeing that this universe, as it is now, is not bound to this state of consciousness. Consciousness is not co-existent with existence. In my own body, and in all of our bodies, we must all admit that we are conscious of very little of the body, and of the greater part of it we are unconscious. Yet it exists. Nobody is ever conscious of his brain, for example. I never saw my brain, and I am never conscious of it. Yet I know that it exists. Therefore we may say that it is not consciousness that we want, but the existence of something which is not this gross matter, and that that knowledge can be gained even in this life, and that that knowledge has been gained and demonstrated, as far as any science has been demonstrated, is a fact. We have to look into these things, and I would insist on reminding those who are here present on one other point. It is well to remember that very many times we are deluded on this. Certain people place before us the demonstration of a fact which is not ordinary to the spiritual nature, and we reject that fact because we say we cannot find it to be true. In many cases the fact may not be correct, but in many cases, also, we forget to consider whether we are fit to receive the demonstration or not, whether we have permitted our bodies and our minds to become fit subjects for their discovery.



## ON ART IN INDIA

"Arts and Sciences in India" was the topic under which the Swami Vivekananda was introduced to the audience at Wendte Hall, San Francisco. The Swami held the attention of his hearers throughout as was demonstrated by the many questions which were put to him after his address

The Swami said in part .

In the history of nations, the government, at the beginning, has always been in the hands of the priests All the learning also has proceeded from the priests Then, after the priests, the government changes hands, and the Kshatriya, or the kingly, power prevails, and the military rule is triumphant This has always been true. And last comes the grasp of luxury, and the people sink down under it to be dominated by stronger and more barbarous races.

Amongst all races of the world, from the earliest time in history, India has been called the land of wisdom. For ages India itself has never gone out to conquer other nations Its people have never been fighters Unlike your Western people, they do not eat meat, for meat makes fighters , the blood of animals makes you restless and you desire to do something.

Compare India and England in the Elizabethan period What a dark age it was for your people and how enlightened we were even then The Anglo-Saxon people have always been badly fitted for art They have good poetry—for instance, how wonderful is the blank verse of Shakespeare Merely the rhyming of words is not good. It is not the most civilised thing in the world

In India, music was developed to the full seven notes, even to half and quarter notes, ages ago India led in

music, also in drama and sculpture. Whatever is done now is merely an attempt at imitation. Everything now in India hinges on the question of how little a man requires to live upon.

---

# THE MAHABHARATA

*(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena,  
California, February 1, 1900)*

The other epic about which I am going to speak to you this evening, is called the Mahâbhârata. It contains the story of a race descended from King Bharata, who was the son of Dushyanta and Sakuntalâ. Mahâ means great, and Bhârata means the descendants of Bharata, from whom India has derived its name, Bharata. Mahabharata means Great India, or the story of the great descendants of Bharata. The scene of this epic is the ancient kingdom of the Kurus, and the story is based on the great war which took place between the Kurus and the Pâñchâlas. So the region of the quarrel is not very big. This epic is the most popular one in India; and it exercises the same authority in India as Homer's poems did over the Greeks. As ages went on, more and more matter was added to it, until it has become a huge book of about a hundred thousand couplets. All sorts of tales, legends and myths, philosophical treatises, scraps of history, and various discussions have been added to it from time to time, until it is a vast, gigantic mass of literature, and through it all runs the old, original story.

The central story of the Mahabharata is of a war between two families of cousins, one family, called the Kauravas, the other, the Pândavas—for the empire of India.

The Aryans came into India in small companies. Gradually, these tribes began to extend, until, at last, they became the undisputed rulers of India, and then arose this fight to gain the mastery, between two branches of the same family. Those of you that have studied the Gîtâ know how the book opens with a description of the

battle-field, with two armies arrayed one against the other  
That is the war of the Mahabharata

There were two brothers, sons of the emperor The elder one was called Dhritarâshtra, and the other was called Pându Dhritarashtra, the elder one, was born blind. According to Indian law, no blind, halt, maimed, consumptive, or any other constitutionally diseased person, can inherit He can only get a maintenance. So, Dhritarashtra could not ascend the throne, though he was the elder son, and Pandu became the emperor

Dhritarashtra had a hundred sons and Pandu had only five After the death of Pandu at an early age, Dhritarashtra became King of the Kurus and brought up the sons of Pandu along with his own children When they grew up they were placed under the tutorship of the great priest-warrior, Drona, and were well trained in the various martial arts and sciences befitting princes The education of the princes being finished, Dhritarashtra put Yudhishtira, the eldest of the sons of Pandu, on the throne of his father The sterling virtues of Yudhishtira and the valour and devotion of his other brothers aroused jealousies in the hearts of the sons of the blind king, and at the instigation of Duryodhana, the eldest of them, the five Pandava brothers were prevailed upon to visit Vâranâvata, on the plea of a religious festival that was being held there There they were accommodated in a palace made under Duryodhana's instructions, of hemp, resin, and lac, and other inflammable materials, which were subsequently set fire to secretly But the good Vidura, the step-brother of Dhritarashtra, having become cognisant of the evil intentions of Duryodhanâ and his party, had warned the Pandavas of the plot, and they managed to escape without anyone's knowledge When the Kurus saw the house was reduced to ashes, they heaved a sigh of relief and thought all obstacles were now removed out of their path Then the children of Dhritarashtra got hold of the kingdom The five

Pandava brothers had fled to the forest with their mother, Kunti. They lived there by begging, and went about in disguise giving themselves out as Brahmana students. Many were the hardships and adventures they encountered in the wild forests, but their fortitude of mind, and strength and valour made them conquer all dangers. So things went on until they came to hear of the approaching marriage of the princess of a neighbouring country.

I told you last night of the peculiar form of the ancient Indian marriage. It was called Svayamvara, that is, the choosing of the husband by the princess. A great gathering of princes and nobles assembled, amongst whom the princess would choose her husband. Preceded by her trumpeters and heralds she would approach, carrying a garland of flowers in her hand. At the throne of each candidate for her hand, the praises of that prince and all his great deeds in battle would be declared by the heralds. And when the princess decided which prince she desired to have for a husband, she would signify the fact by throwing the marriage-garland round his neck. Then the ceremony would turn into a wedding. King Drupada was a great king, king of the Panchalas, and his daughter, Draupadi, famed far and wide for her beauty and accomplishments, was going to choose a hero.

At a Svayamvara there was always a great feat of arms or something of the kind. On this occasion a mark in the form of a fish was set up high in the sky, under that fish was a wheel with a hole in the centre, continually turning round, and beneath was a tub of water. A man looking at the reflection of the fish in the tub of water was asked to send an arrow and hit the eye of the fish through the Chakra, or wheel, and he who succeeded would be married to the princess. Now, there came kings and princes from different parts of India, all anxious to win the hand of the princess, and one after another they

tried their skill, and every one of them failed to hit the mark '

You know, there are four castes in India the highest caste is that of the hereditary priest, the Brâhmana , next, is the caste of the Kshatriya, composed of kings and fighters ; next, the Vaishyas, the traders or businessmen, and then, Sudras, the servants Now, this princess was, of course, a Kshatriya, one of the second caste

When all those princes failed in hitting the mark, then, the son of King Drupada rose up in the midst of the court and said "The Kshatriya, the king caste has failed; now the contest is open to the other castes Let a Brahmana, even a Sudra, take part in it , whosoever hits the mark, marries Draupadi "

Among the Brahmanas were seated the five Pandava brothers Arjuna, the third brother, was the hero of the bow He arose and stepped forward. Now, Brahmanas as a caste are very quiet and rather timid people According to the law, they must not touch a warlike weapon, they must not wield a sword, they must not go into any enterprise that is dangerous Their life is one of contemplation, study, and control of the inner nature. Judge, therefore, how quiet and peaceable a people they are When the Brahmanas saw this man get up, they thought this man was going to bring the wrath of the Kshatriyas upon them, and that they would all be killed So they tried to dissuade him, but Arjuna did not listen to them, because he was a soldier He lifted the bow in his hand, strung it without any effort, and drawing it, sent the arrow right through the wheel and hit the eye of the fish.

Then there was great jubilation Draupadi, the princess, approached Arjuna and threw the beautiful garland of flowers over his head But there arose a great cry among the princes, who could not bear the idea that this beautiful princess who was a Kshatriya should be won by a poor Brahmana, from among this huge assembly of

kings and princes So, they wanted to fight Arjuna and snatch her from him by force The brothers had a tremendous fight with the warriors, but held their own, and carried off the bride in triumph.

The five brothers now returned home to Kunti with the princess Brahmanas have to live by begging. So they, who lived as Brahmanas, used to go out, and what they got by begging they brought home and the mother divided it among them Thus the five brothers, with the princess, came to the cottage where the mother lived They shouted out to her jocosely, "Mother, we have brought home a most wonderful alms to-day " The mother replied. "Enjoy it in common, all of you, my children " Then the mother seeing the princess, exclaimed, "Oh! what have I said! It is a girl!" But what could be done! The mother's word was spoken once for all. It must not be disregarded The mother's words must be fulfilled She could not be made to utter an untruth, as she never had done so So Draupadi became the common wife of all the five brothers

Now, you know, in every society there are stages of development Behind this epic there is a wonderful glimpse of the ancient historic times The author of the poem mentions the fact of the five brothers marrying the same woman, but he tries to gloss it over, to find an excuse and a cause for such an act. it was the mother's command, the mother sanctioned this strange betrothal, and so on. You know, in every nation there has been a certain stage in society that allowed polyandry—all the brothers of a family would marry one wife in common Now, this was evidently a glimpse of the past polyandrous stage

In the meantime, the brother of the princess was perplexed in his mind and thought. "Who are these people? Who is this man whom my sister is going to marry? They have not any chariots, horses, or anything Why, they go on foot!" So he had followed them at a distance, and at night overheard their conversation and

became fully convinced that they were really Kshatriyas. Then king Drupada came to know who they were and was greatly delighted

Though at first much objection was raised, it was declared by Vyasa that such a marriage was allowable for these princes, and it was permitted. So the king Drupada had to yield to this polyandrous marriage, and the princess was married to the five sons of Pandu.

Then the Pandavas lived in peace and prosperity and became more powerful every day. Though Duryodhana and his party conceived of fresh plots to destroy them, King Dhritarashtra was prevailed upon by the wise counsels of the elders to make peace with the Pandavas, and so he invited them home amidst the rejoicings of the people and gave them half of the kingdom. Then, the five brothers built for themselves a beautiful city, called Indraprastha, and extended their dominions, laying all the people under tribute to them. Then, the eldest, Yudhishtira, in order to declare himself emperor over all the kings of ancient India, decided to perform a Rajasuya Yajna, or Imperial Sacrifice, in which the conquered kings would have to come with tribute and swear allegiance, and help the performance of the Sacrifice by personal services. Sri Krishna, who had become their friend and a relative, came to them and approved of the idea. But there was one obstacle to its performance. A king, Jarâsandha by name, who intended to offer a Sacrifice of a hundred kings, had eighty-six of them kept as captives with him. Sri Krishna counselled an attack on Jarasandha, so he, Bhîma and Arjuna challenged the king, who accepted the challenge and was finally conquered by Bhîma, after fourteen days' continuous wrestling. The captive kings were then set free.

Then the four younger brothers went out with armies on a conquering expedition, each in a different direction, and brought all the kings under subjection to Yudhishtira.



Returning, they laid all the vast wealth they secured at the feet of the eldest brother, to meet the expenses of the great Sacrifice.

So, to this Rajasuya Sacrifice all the liberated kings came, along with those conquered by the brothers, and rendered homage to Yudhishtira. King Dhritarashtra and his sons were also invited to come and take a share in the performance of the Sacrifice. At the conclusion of the Sacrifice, Yudhishtira was crowned emperor, and declared as lord paramount. This was the sowing of the future feud. Duryodhana came back from the Sacrifice filled with jealousy against Yudhishtira, as their sovereignty and vast splendour and wealth were more than he could bear; and so he devised plans to effect their fall by guile, as he knew that to overcome them by force was beyond his power. This king, Yudhishtira, had the love of gambling, and he was challenged at an evil hour to play dice with Sakuni, the crafty gambler and the evil genius of Duryodhana. In ancient India, if a man of the military caste was challenged to fight, he must at any price accept the challenge to uphold his honour. And if he was challenged to play dice, it was a point of honour to play, and dishonourable to decline the challenge. King Yudhishtira, says the Epic, was the incarnation of all virtues. Even he, the great sage-king, had to accept the challenge. Sakuni and his party had made false dice. So Yudhishtira lost game after game, and stung with his losses, he went on with the fatal game, staking everything he had, and losing all, until all his possessions, his kingdom and everything, were lost. The last stage came when, under further challenge, he had no other resources left but to stake his brothers, and then himself, and last of all, the fair Draupadi, and lost all. Now they were completely at the mercy of the Kauravas, who cast all sorts of insults upon them, and subjected Draupadi to most inhuman treatment. At last through the intervention of the blind king,

they got their liberty, and were asked to return home and rule their kingdom. But Duryodhana saw the danger and forced his father to allow one more throw of the dice in which the party which would lose, should retire to the forests for twelve years, and then live unrecognised in a city for one year, but if they were found out, the same term of exile should have to be undergone once again, and then only the kingdom was to be restored to the exiled. This last game Yudhishtira lost also, and the five Pandava brothers retired to the forests with Draupadi, as homeless exiles. They lived in the forests and mountains for twelve years. There they performed many deeds of virtue and valour, and would go out now and then on a long round of pilgrimages, visiting many holy places. That part of the poem is very interesting and instructive, and various are the incidents, tales and legends with which this part of the book is replete. There are in it beautiful and sublime stories of ancient India, religious and philosophical. Great sages came to see the brothers in their exile, and narrated to them many telling stories of ancient India, so as to make them bear lightly the burden of their exile. One only I will relate to you here.

There was a king called Asvapati. The king had a daughter, who was so good and beautiful that she was called Sâvitri, which is the name of a sacred prayer of the Hindus. When Savitri grew old enough, her father asked her to choose a husband for herself. These ancient Indian princesses were very independent, you see, and chose their own princely suitors.

Sâvitri consented and travelled in distant regions, mounted in a golden chariot, with her guards and aged courtiers to whom her father entrusted her, stopping at different courts, and seeing different princes, but not one of them could win the heart of Savitri. They came at last to a holy hermitage in one of those forests that in ancient

India were reserved for animals, and where no animals were allowed to be killed. The animals lost the fear of man—even the fish in the lakes came and took food out of the hand. For thousands of years no one had killed anything therein. The sages and the aged went there to live among the deer and the birds. Even criminals were safe there. When a man got tired of life, he would go to the forest, and in the company of sages, talking of religion and meditating thereon, he passed the remainder of his life.

Now it happened that there was a king, Dyumatsena, who was defeated by his enemies, and was deprived of his kingdom when he was struck with age and had lost his sight. This poor, old, blind king, with his queen and his son, took refuge in the forest, and passed his life in rigid penance. His boy's name was Satyavân.

It came to pass that after having visited all the different royal courts, Sâvitri at last came to this hermitage, or holy place. Not even the greatest king could pass by the hermitages, or Ashramas as they were called, without going to pay homage to the sages, for such honour and respect was felt for these holy men. The greatest emperor of India would be only too glad to trace his descent to some sage who lived in a forest, subsisting on roots and fruits, and clad in rags. We are all children of sages. That is the respect that is paid to religion. So, even kings, when they pass by the hermitages, feel honoured to go in and pay their respects to the sages. If they approach on horseback, they descend and walk as they advance towards them. If they arrive in a chariot, chariot and armour must be left outside when they enter. No fighting man can enter unless he comes in the manner of a religious man, quiet and gentle.

So, Savitri came to this hermitage and saw there Satyavan, the hermit's son, and her heart was conquered. She had escaped all the princes of the palaces and the

courts, but here in the forest-refuge of King Dyumatsena, his son, Satyavan, stole her heart

When Savitri returned to her father's house, he asked her : "Savitri, dear daughter, speak. Did you see anybody whom you would like to marry?" Then softly with blushes, said Savitri, "Yes, father " "What is the name of the prince?" "He is no prince, but the son of the king Dyumatsena who has lost his kingdom—a prince without a patrimony, who lives a monastic life, the life of a Sannyâsin in a forest, collecting roots and herbs, helping and feeding his old father and mother, who live in a cottage."

On hearing this the father consulted the Sage Nârada, who happened to be then present there, and he declared it was the most ill-omened choice that was ever made. The king then asked him to explain why it was so. And Nârada said : "Within twelve months from this time the young man will die " Then the king started with terror, and spoke, "Savitri, this young man is going to die in twelve months and you will become a widow think of that! Desist from your choice, my child, you shall never be married to a short-lived and fated bridegroom " "Never mind, father, do not ask me to marry another person and sacrifice the chastity of mind, for I love and have accepted in my mind that good and brave Satyavan only as my husband. A maiden chooses only once, and she never departs from her troth " When the king found that Savitri was resolute in mind and heart, he complied. Then Savitri married prince Satyavan, and she quietly went from the palace of her father into the forest, to live with her chosen husband and help her husband's parents. Now, though Savitri knew the exact date when Satyavan was to die, she kept it hidden from him. Daily he went into the depths of the forest, collected fruits and flowers, gathered faggots, and then came back to the cottage, and she cooked the meals and helped the old people. Thus their lives went on until the fatal day came near, and three short days

remained only. She took a severe vow of three nights' penance and holy fasts, and kept her hard vigils. Savitri spent sorrowful and sleepless nights with fervent prayers and unseen tears, till the dreaded morning dawned. That day Savitri could not bear him out of her sight, even for a moment. She begged permission from his parents to accompany her husband, when he went to gather the usual herbs and fuel, and gaining their consent she went. Suddenly, in faltering accents, he complained to his wife of feeling faint, "My head is dizzy, and my senses reel, dear Savitri, I feel sleep stealing over me, let me rest beside thee for a while." In fear and trembling she replied, "Come, lay your head upon my lap, my dearest lord." And he laid his burning head in the lap of his wife, and ere long sighed and expired. Claspings him to her, her eyes flowing with tears, there she sat in the lonesome forest, until the emissaries of Death approached to take away the soul of Satyavan. But they could not come near to the place where Savitri sat with the dead body of her husband, his head resting in her lap. There was a zone of fire surrounding her, and not one of the emissaries of Death could come within it. They all fled back from it, returned to the King Yama, the God of Death, and told him why they could not obtain the soul of this man.

Then came Yama, the God of Death, the Judge of the dead. He was the first man that died—the first man that died on earth—and he had become the presiding deity over all those that die. He judges whether, after a man has died, he is to be punished or rewarded. So he came himself. Of course, he could go inside that charmed circle, as he was a god. When he came to Savitri, he said: "Daughter, give up this dead body, for know, death is the fate of mortals, and I am the first of mortals who died. Since then, every one has had to die. Death is the fate of man." Thus told, Savitri walked off, and Yama drew the soul out. Yama having possessed himself of the

soul of the young man proceeded on his way Before he had gone far he heard footfalls upon the dry leaves He turned back "Savitri, daughter, why are you following me? This is the fate of all mortals " "I am not following thee, Father," replied Savitri, "but this is, also, the fate of woman, she follows where her love takes her, and the Eternal Law separates not loving man and faithful wife." Then said the God of Death, "Ask for any boon, except the life of your husband " "If thou art pleased to grant a boon, O Lord of Death, I ask that my father-in-law may be cured of his blindness and made happy " "Let thy pious wish be granted, dutious daughter." And then the King of Death travelled on with the soul of Satyavan Again the same footfall was heard from behind He looked round "Savitri, my daughter, you are still following me?" "Yes, my Father, I cannot help doing so, I am trying all the time to go back, but the mind goes after my husband and the body follows. The soul has already gone, for in that soul is also mine, and when you take the soul, the body follows, does it not?" "Pleased am I with your words, fair Savitri Ask yet another boon of me, but it must not be the life of your husband " "Let my father-in-law regain his lost wealth and kingdom, Father, if thou art pleased to grant another supplication " "Loving daughter," Yama answered, "this boon I now bestow, but return home, for living mortal cannot go with King Yama " And then Yama pursued his way. But Savitri, meek and faithful, still followed her departed husband Yama again turned back "Noble Savitri, follow not in hopeless woe " "I cannot choose but follow where thou takest my loved one " "Then suppose, Savitri, that your husband was a sinner and has to go to hell In that case goes Savitri with the one she loves?" "Glad am I to follow where he goes, be it life or death, heaven or hell," said the loving wife "Blessed are your words, my child, pleased am I with you, ask yet another boon, but the dead come

not to life again." "Since you so permit me, then, let the imperial line of my father-in-law be not destroyed; let his kingdom descend to Satyavan's sons." And then the God of Death smiled. "My daughter, thou shalt have thy desire now. here is the soul of thy husband, he shall live again. He shall live to be a father and thy children also shall reign in due course. Return home. Love has conquered Death! Woman never loved like thee, and thou art the proof that even I, the God of Death, am powerless against the power of the true love that abideth!"

This is the story of Savitri, and every girl in India must aspire to be like Savitri, whose love could not be conquered by death, and who through this tremendous love snatched back from even Yama, the soul of her husband.

The book is full of hundreds of beautiful episodes like this. I began by telling you that the Mahabharata is one of the greatest books in the world, and consists of about a hundred thousand verses, in eighteen Parvas, or volumes.

To return to our main story. We left the Pandava brothers in exile. Even there they were not allowed to remain unmolested from the evil plots of Duryodhana, but all of them were futile.

A story of their forest life, I shall tell you here. One day the brothers became thirsty in the forest. Yudhishtira bade his brother, Nakula, go and fetch water. He quickly proceeded towards the place where there was water and soon came to a crystal lake, and was about to drink of it, when he heard a voice utter these words: "Stop, O child. First answer my questions, and then drink of this water." But Nakula, who was exceedingly thirsty, disregarded these words, drank of the water, and having drunk of it, dropped down dead. As Nakula did not return, King Yudhishtira told Sahadeva to seek his brother and bring back water with him. So Sahadeva proceeded to the lake, and beheld his brother lying dead. Afflicted at the death of his brother, and suffering severely from thirst, he went

towards the water, when the same words were heard by him. "O child, first answer my questions, and then drink of the water" He also disregarded these words, and having satisfied his thirst, dropped down dead. Subsequently, Arjuna and Bhima were sent one after the other, on a similar quest, but neither returned, having drunk of the lake and dropped down dead. Then Yudhishtira rose up, to go in search of his brothers. At length, he came to the beautiful lake and saw his brothers lying dead. His heart was full of grief at the sight, and he began to lament. Suddenly he heard the same voice saying, "Do not, O child, act rashly. I am a Yaksha living as a crane on tiny fish. It is by me that thy younger brothers have been brought under the sway of the Lord of departed spirits. If thou, O Prince, answer not the questions put by me, even thou shalt number the fifth corpse. Having answered my questions first, do thou, O Kunti's son, drink and carry away as much as thou requirest." Yudhishtira replied, "I shall answer thy questions according to my intelligence. Do thou ask me!" The Yaksha then asked him several questions, all of which Yudhishtira answered satisfactorily. One of the questions asked was: "What is the most wonderful fact in this world?" "We see our fellow-beings every moment falling off around us, but those that are left behind think that they will never die. This is the most curious fact: in face of death, none believes that he will die!" Another question asked was "What is the path of knowing the secret of religion?" And Yudhishtira answered "By argument nothing can be settled, doctrines there are many, various are the Scriptures, one part contradicting the other. There are not two sages who do not differ in their opinions. The secret of religion is buried deep, as it were, in dark caves. So the path to be followed is that which the great ones have trodden." Then the Yaksha said, "I am pleased. I am Dharma, the God of Justice in the form of the crane. I came to test you



Now, your brothers, see, not one of them is dead. It is all my magic. Since abstention from injury is regarded by thee as higher than both profit and pleasure, therefore, let all thy brothers live, O Bull of the Bharata race." And at these words of the Yaksha, the Pandavas rose up.

Here is a glimpse of the nature of the king Yudhishtira. We find by his answers that he was more of a philosopher, more of a Yogi, than a king.

Now, as the thirteenth year of the exile was drawing nigh, the Yaksha bade them go to Virâta's kingdom and live there in such disguises as they would think best.

So, after the term of the twelve years' exile had expired, they went to the kingdom of Virata in different disguises to spend the remaining one year in concealment, and entered into menial service in the king's household. Thus Yudhishtira became a Brâhmana courtier of the king, as one skilled in dice; Bhima was appointed a cook; Arjuna, dressed as a eunuch, was made a teacher of dancing and music to Uttarâ, the princess, and remained in the inner apartments of the king, Nakula became the keeper of the king's horses; and Sahadeva got the charge of the cows; and Draupadi, disguised as a waiting-woman, was also admitted into the queen's household. Thus concealing their identity the Pandava brothers safely spent a year, and the search of Duryodhana to find them out was of no avail. They were only discovered just when the year was out.

Then Yudhishtira sent an ambassador to Dhritarashtra and demanded that half of the kingdom should, as their share, be restored to them. But Duryodhana hated his cousins and would not consent to their legitimate demands. They were even willing to accept a single province, nay, even five villages. But the headstrong Duryodhana declared that he would not yield without fight even as much land as a needle's point would hold. Dhritarashtra pleaded again and again for peace, but all in vain. Krishna

also went and tried to avert the impending war and death of kinsmen, so did the wise elders of the royal court, but all negotiations for a peaceful partition of the kingdom were futile. So, at last preparations were made on both sides for war, and all the warlike nations took part in it.

The old Indian customs of the Kshatriyas were observed in it. Duryodhana took one side, Yudhishtira, the other. From Yudhishtira messengers were at once sent to all the surrounding kings, entreating their alliance, since honourable men would grant the request that first reached them. So, warriors from all parts assembled to espouse the cause of either the Pandavas or the Kurus according to the precedence of their requests, and thus one brother joined this side, and the other that side, the father on one side, and the son on the other. The most curious thing was the code of war of those days, as soon as the battle for the day ceased and evening came, the opposing parties were good friends, even going to each other's tents, however when the morning came, again they proceeded to fight each other. That was the strange trait that the Hindus carried down to the time of the Mohammedan invasion. Then again, a man on horseback must not strike one on foot, must not poison the weapon; must not vanquish the enemy in any unequal fight, or by dishonesty, and must never take undue advantage of another, and so on. If any deviated from these rules he would be covered with dishonour and shunned. The Kshatriyas were trained in that way. And when the foreign invasion came from Central Asia, the Hindus treated the invaders in the self-same way. They defeated them several times, and on as many occasions sent them back to their homes with presents, etc. The code laid down was that they must not usurp anybody's country, and when a man was beaten, he must be sent back to his country with due regard to his position. The Mohammedan

conquerors treated the Hindu kings differently, and when they got them once, they destroyed them without remorse

Mind you, in those days—in the times of our story, the poem says—the science of arms was not the mere use of bows and arrows at all, it was magic archery in which the use of Mantras, concentration etc., played a prominent part. One man could fight millions of men and burn them at will. He could send one arrow and it would rain thousands of arrows and thunder; he could make anything burn, and so on—it was all divine magic. One fact is most curious in both these poems—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—along with these magic arrows and all these things going on, you see the cannon already in use. The cannon is an old, old thing, used by the Chinese and the Hindus. Upon the walls of the cities were hundreds of curious weapons made of hollow iron tubes, which filled with powder and ball would kill hundreds of men. The people believed that the Chinese, by magic, put the devil inside a hollow iron tube, and when they applied a little fire to a hole, the devil came out with a terrific noise and killed many people.

So in those old days, they used to fight with magic arrows. One man would be able to fight millions of others. They had their military arrangements and tactics: there were the foot soldiers, termed the Pâda; then the cavalry, Turaga, and two other divisions which the moderns have lost and given up—there was the elephant corps,—hundreds and hundreds of elephants, with men on their backs, formed into regiments and protected with huge sheets of iron mail, and these elephants would bear down upon a mass of the enemy—then, there were the chariots, of course (you have all seen pictures of those old chariots, they were used in every country). These were the four divisions of the army in those old days.

Now, both parties alike wished to secure the alliance of Krishna. But he declined to take an active part and

fight in this war, but offered himself as charioteer to Arjuna, and as the friend and counsellor of the Pandavas, while to Duryodhana he gave his army of mighty soldiers

Then was fought on the vast plain of Kurukshetra the great battle in which Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and the brothers of Duryodhana, with the kinsmen on both sides and thousands of other heroes, fell. The war lasted eighteen days. Indeed, out of the eighteen Akshauhinis of soldiers very few men were left. The death of Duryodhana ended the war in favour of the Pandavas. It was followed by the lament of Gândhârî, the queen, and the widowed women, and the funerals of the deceased warriors

The greatest incident of the war was the marvellous and immortal poem of the Gita, the Song Celestial. It is the popular Scripture of India and the loftiest of all teachings. It consists of a dialogue held by Arjuna with Krishna, just before the commencement of the fight on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. I would advise those of you who have not read that book to read it. If you only knew how much it has influenced your own country even! If you want to know the source of Emerson's inspiration, it is this book, the Gita. He went to see Carlyle, and Carlyle made him a present of the Gita, and that little book is responsible for the Concord Movement. All the broad movements in America, in one way or other, are indebted to the Concord party.

The central figure of the Gita is Krishna. As you worship Jesus of Nazareth as God come down as man, so, the Hindus worship many Incarnations of God. They believe in not one or two only, but in many, who have come down from time to time, according to the needs of the world, for the preservation of Dharma and destruction of wickedness. Each sect has one, and Krishna is one of them. Krishna, perhaps, has a larger number of followers in India than any other Incarnation of God. His followers

hold that he was the most perfect of these Incarnations. Why? "Because," they say, "look at Buddha and other Incarnations. they were only monks, and they had no sympathy for married people. How could they have? But look at Krishna. he was great as a son, as a king, as a father, and all through his life he practised the marvellous teachings which he preached." "He who in the midst of the greatest activity finds the sweetest peace, and in the midst of the greatest calmness is most active, he has known the secret of life." Krishna shows the way how to do this—by being non-attached: do everything but do not get identified with anything. You are the Soul, the pure, the free, all the time, you are the Witness. Our misery comes, not from work, but by our getting attached to something. Take for instance, money: money is a great thing to have, earn it, says Krishna, struggle hard to get money, but don't get attached to it. So with children, with wife, husband, relatives, fame, everything: you have no need to shun them, only don't get attached. There is only one attachment and that belongs to the Lord, and to none other. Work for them, love them, do good to them, sacrifice a hundred lives, if need be, for them, but never be attached. His own life was the exact exemplification of that.

Remember that the book which delineates the life of Krishna is several thousand years old, and some parts of his life are very similar to those of Jesus of Nazareth. Krishna was of royal birth, there was a tyrant king, called Kamsa, and there was a prophecy that one would be born of such and such a family, who would be king. So Kamsa ordered all the male children to be massacred. The father and mother of Krishna were cast by the King Kamsa into prison, where the child was born. A light suddenly shone in the prison and the child spoke saying, "I am the Light of the world, born for the good of the world." You find Krishna again symbolically represented with cows—

“The Great Cowherd,” as he is called Sages affirmed that God Himself was born, and they went to pay him homage In other parts of the story, the similarity between the two does not continue

Sri Krishna conquered this tyrant Kamsa, but he never thought of accepting or occupying the throne himself He had nothing to do with that He had done his duty and there it ended.

After the conclusion of the Kurukshetra War, the great warrior and venerable grandsire, Bhishma, who fought ten days out of the eighteen days’ battle, still lay on his deathbed and gave instructions to Yudhishtira on various subjects, such as the duties of the king, the duties of the four castes, the four stages of life, the laws of marriage, the bestowing of gifts, etc., basing them on the teachings of the ancient sages He explained Sâmkhya philosophy and Yoga philosophy, and narrated numerous tales and traditions about saints and gods and kings These teachings occupy nearly one-fourth of the entire work and form an invaluable storehouse of Hindu laws and moral codes Yudhishtira had in the meantime been crowned king But the awful bloodshed and extinction of superiors and relatives weighed heavily on his mind, and then, under the advice of Vyasa, he performed the Ashvamedha Sacrifice.

After the war, for fifteen years Dhritarashtra dwelt in peace and honour, obeyed by Yudhishtira and his brothers Then the aged monarch leaving Yudhishtira on the throne, retired to the forest with his devoted wife and Kunti, the mother of the Pandava brothers, to pass his last days in asceticism

Thirty-six years had now passed since Yudhishtira regained his empire Then came to him the news that Krishna had left his mortal body Krishna, the sage, his friend, his prophet, his counsellor, had departed Arjuna hastened to Dwârakâ and came back only to confirm the

sad news that Krishna and the Yâdavas were all dead. Then the king and the other brothers, overcome with sorrow, declared that the time for them to go, too, had arrived. So they cast off the burden of royalty, placed Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, on the throne, and retired to the Himalayas, on the Great Journey, the Mahâprasthâna. This was a peculiar form of Sannyâsa. It was a custom for old kings to become Sannyasins. In ancient India, when men became very old, they would give up everything. So did the kings. When a man did not want to live any more, then he went towards the Himalayas, without eating or drinking, and walked on and on till the body failed. All the time thinking of God, he just marched on till the body gave way.

Then came the gods, the sages, and they told the king Yudhishtira, that he should go and reach heaven. To go to heaven one has to cross the highest peaks of the Himalayas. Beyond the Himalayas is Mount Meru. On the top of Mount Meru is heaven. None ever went there in this body. There the gods reside. And Yudhishtira was called upon by the gods to go there.

So, the five brothers and their wife clad themselves in robes of bark, and set out on their journey. On the way, they were followed by a dog. On and on they went, and they turned their weary feet northward to where the Himalaya lifts his lofty peaks, and they saw the mighty Mount Meru in front of them. Silently they walked on in the snow, until suddenly the queen fell, to rise no more. To Yudhishtira who was leading the way, Bhima, one of the brothers, said: "Behold, O King, the queen has fallen." The king shed tears, but he did not look back. "We are going to meet Krishna," he says. "No time to look back. March on." After a while, again Bhima said: "Behold, our brother, Sahadeva has fallen." The king shed tears; but paused not. "March on," he cried. One after the other, in the cold and snow, all the four

brothers dropped down, but unshaken, though alone, the king advanced onward. Looking behind, he saw the faithful dog was still following him. And so the king and the dog went on, through snow and ice, over hill and dale, climbing higher and higher, till they reached Mount Meru, and there they began to hear the chimes of heaven, and celestial flowers were showered upon the virtuous king by the gods. Then descended the chariot of the gods, and Indra prayed him "Ascend in this chariot, greatest of mortals. thou that alone art given to enter heaven without changing the mortal body." But no, that Yudhishtira would not do without his devoted brothers and his queen; then Indra explained to him that the brothers had already gone thither before him.

And Yudhishtira looked around and said to his dog. "Get into the chariot, child." The god stood aghast. "What! the dog?" he cried. "Do thou cast off this dog! The dog goeth not to heaven! Great King, what dost thou mean? Art thou mad? Thou, the most virtuous of the human race, thou only canst go to heaven in thy body." "But he has been my devoted companion through snow and ice. When all my brothers were dead, my queen dead, he alone never left me. How can I leave him now?" "There is no place in heaven for men with dogs. He has to be left behind. There is nothing unrighteous in this." "I do not go to heaven," replied the king, "without the dog. I shall never give up such a one who has taken refuge with me, until my own life is at an end. I shall never swerve from righteousness, nay, not even for the joys of heaven or the urging of a god." "Then," said Indra, "on one condition the dog goes to heaven. You have been the most virtuous of mortals and he has been a dog, killing and eating animals, he is sinful, hunting and taking other lives. You can exchange heaven with him." "Agreed," says the king. "Let the dog go to heaven."



At once, the scene changed. Hearing these noble words of Yudhishtira, the dog revealed himself as Dharma, the dog was no other than Yama, the Lord of Death and Justice. And Dharma exclaimed, "Behold, O King, no man was ever so unselfish as thou, willing to exchange heaven with a little dog, and for his sake disclaiming all his virtues, and ready to go to hell even for him. Thou art well born, O King of kings. Thou hast compassion for all creatures, O Bhârata, of which this is a bright example. Hence, regions of undying felicity are thine! Thou hast won them, O King, and thine is a celestial and high goal."

Then Yudhishtira, with Indra, Dharma and other gods, proceeds to heaven in a celestial car. He undergoes some trials, bathes in the celestial Ganges, and assumes a celestial body. He meets his brothers who are now immortals, and all at last is bliss.

Thus ends the story of the Mahabharata, setting forth in a sublime poem the triumph of virtue and defeat of vice.

In speaking of the Mahabharata to you, it is simply impossible for me to present the unending array of the grand and majestic characters of the mighty heroes depicted by the genius and master-mind of Vyasa. The internal conflicts between righteousness and filial affection in the mind of the god-fearing, yet feeble, old, blind king Dhritarashtra, the majestic character of the grandsire Bhishma, the noble and virtuous nature of the royal Yudhishtira, and of the other four brothers, as mighty in valour as in devotion and loyalty, the peerless character of Krishna, unsurpassed in human wisdom, and not less brilliant, the characters of the women—the stately queen Gandhari, the loving mother Kunti, the ever-devoted and all-suffering Draupadi—these and hundreds of other characters of this Epic and those of the Ramayana, have been the cherished heritage of the whole Hindu world for the last several thousands of years and form the basis of

their thoughts and of their moral and ethical ideas. In fact, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the two encyclopædias of the ancient Aryan life and wisdom, portraying an ideal civilisation, which humanity has yet to aspire after

---

## THOUGHTS ON THE GITA

During his sojourn in Calcutta in 1897, Swami Vivekananda used to stay for the most part at the Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, located then at Alumbazar. During this time several young men, who had been preparing themselves for some time previously, gathered round him and took the vows of Brahmacharyam and Sannyâsa, and Swamiji began to train them for future work, by holding classes on the Gita and Vedanta, and initiating them into the practices of meditation. In one of these classes he talked eloquently in Bengali on the Gita. The following is the translation of the summary of the discourse as it was entered in the Math diary.

The book known as the Gita forms a part of the Mahâbhârata. To understand the Gita properly, several things are very important to know. First, whether it formed a part of the Mahabharata, i.e., whether the authorship attributed to Veda-Vyâsa was true, or if it was merely interpolated within the great epic; secondly, whether there was any historical personality of the name of Krishna, thirdly, whether the great war of Kurukshetra as mentioned in the Gita actually took place; and fourthly, whether Arjuna and others were real historical persons.

Now in the first place, let us see what grounds there are for such enquiry. We know that there were many who went by the name of Veda-Vyasa, and among them who was the real author of the Gita—the Bâdarâyana Vyasa or Dvaipâyana Vyasa? "Vyasa" was only a title. Any one who composed a new Purâna was known by the name of Vyasa, like the word Vikramâditya, which was also a general name. Another point is, the book, Gita, had not been much known to the generality of people, before Sankarâchârya made it famous by writing his great

commentary on it. Long before that, there was current, according to many, the commentary on it by Bodhâyana. If this could be proved, it would go a long way no doubt, to establish the antiquity of the Gita and the authorship of Vyasa. But the Bodhayana Bhâshya on the Vedanta Sûtras—from which Râmânûja compiled his Sri-Bhâshya, which Sankaracharya mentions and even quotes in part here and there in his own commentary, and which was so greatly discussed by the Swami Dayânanda—not a copy even of that Bodhayana Bhashya could I find while travelling throughout India. It is said that even Ramanuja compiled his Bhashya from a worm-eaten manuscript which he happened to find. When even this great Bodhayana Bhashya on the Vedanta Sûtras is so much enshrouded in the darkness of uncertainty, it is simply useless to try to establish the existence of the Bodhayana Bhashya on the Gita. Some infer that Sankaracharya was the author of the Gita, and that it was he who foisted it into the body of the Mahabharata.

Then as to the second point in question, much doubt exists about the personality of Krishna. In one place in the Chhândogya Upanishad we find mention of Krishna, the son of Devaki, who received spiritual instruction from one Ghorâ, a Yogi. In the Mahabharata, Krishna is the king of Dwârakâ, and in the Vishnu Purâna we find a description of Krishna playing with the Gopis. Again, in the Bhâgavatam, the account of his Râsalilâ is detailed at length. In very ancient times in our country, there was in vogue an Utsava called Madanotsava (celebration in honour of Cupid). That very thing was transformed into Dola and thrust upon the shoulders of Krishna. Who can be so bold as to assert that the Rasalila and other things connected with him were not similarly fastened upon him? In ancient times, there was very little tendency in our country to find out truths by historical research. So any one could say what he thought best without substantiating

it with proper facts and evidence. Another thing : in those ancient times there was very little hankering after name and fame in men. So it often happened that one man composed a book and made it pass current in the name of his Guru or of some one else. In such cases it is very hazardous for the investigator of historical facts to get at the truth. In ancient times, they had no knowledge whatever of geography—imagination ran riot, and so we meet with such fantastic creations of the brain as sweet-ocean, milk-ocean, clarified-butter ocean, curd-ocean, etc.! In the Puranas, we find one living ten thousand years, another a hundred thousand years! But the Vedas say,— शतायुर्वे पुरुष —“Man lives a hundred years.” Whom shall we follow here? So, to reach a correct conclusion in the case of Krishna is well nigh impossible

It is human nature to build round the real character of a great man all sorts of imaginary superhuman attributes. As regards Krishna the same must have happened, but it seems quite probable that he was a king. Quite probable I say, because in ancient times in our country it was chiefly the kings who exerted themselves most in the preaching of Brahma-Jnâna. Another point to be especially noted here is that whoever might have been the author of the Gita, we find its teachings the same as those in the whole of the Mahabharata. From this we can safely infer that in the age of the Mahabharata some great man arose and preached the Brahma-Jnana in this new garb to the then existing society. Another fact comes to the fore that in the olden days, as one sect after another arose, there also came into existence and use among them, one new Scripture or another. It happened, too, that in the lapse of time both the sect and its Scripture died out, or the sect ceased to exist but its Scripture remained. Similarly, it was quite probable that the Gita was the Scripture of such a sect, which had embodied its high and noble ideas in this sacred book.

Now to the third point, bearing on the subject of the Kurukshetra War, no special evidence in support of it can be adduced. But there is no doubt that there was a war fought between the Kurus and the Pâñchâlas. Another thing · how could there be so much discussion about Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga on the battle-field, where the huge army stood in battle array ready to fight, just waiting for the last signal? And was any shorthand writer present there to note down every word spoken between Krishna and Arjuna, in the din and turmoil of the battle-field? According to some, this Kurukshetra War is only an allegory. When we sum up its esoteric significance, it means the war which is constantly going on within man between the tendencies of good and evil. This meaning, too, may not be irrational.

About the fourth point there is enough ground of doubt as regards the historicity of Arjuna and others, and it is this —Satapatha Brâhmana is a very ancient book. In it are mentioned somewhere all the names of those who were the performers of the Asvamedha Yajna, but in those places there is not only no mention but no hint even of the names of Arjuna and others, though it speaks of Janmejaya, the son of Pankshit, and grandson of Arjuna. Yet in the Mahabharata and other books it is stated that Yudhishtira, Arjuna and others celebrated the Ashva-medha sacrifice.

One thing should be especially remembered here, that there is no connection between these historical researches and our real aim, which is, the knowledge that leads to the acquirement of Dharma. Even if the historicity of the whole thing is proved to be absolutely false to-day, it will not in the least be any loss to us. Then what is the use of so much historical research, you may ask? It has its use, because we have to get at the truth, it will not do for us to remain bound by wrong ideas due to ignorance. In this country people think very little of the importance

of such enquiries Many of the sects believe that in order to preach a good thing which may be beneficial to many, there is no harm in telling an untruth, if that helps such preaching, or in other words, the end justifies the means. Hence we find many of our Tantras beginning with, "Mahâdeva said to Pârvatî " But our duty should be to convince ourselves of the truth, to believe in truth only. Such is the power of superstition, or faith in old traditions without enquiry into its truth, that it keeps men bound hand and foot, so much so, that even Jesus the Christ, Mohammed and other great men believed in many such superstitions and could not shake them off You have to keep your eye always fixed on truth only, and shun all superstitions completely

Now it is for us to see what there is in the Gita. If we study the Upanishads we notice, in wandering through the mazes of many irrelevant subjects, the sudden introduction of the discussion of a great truth, just as in the midst of a huge wilderness a traveller unexpectedly comes across here and there an exquisitely beautiful rose, with its leaves, thorns, roots, all entangled Compared with that, the Gita is like these truths beautifully arranged together in their proper places—like a fine garland or a bouquet of the choicest flowers The Upanishads deal elaborately with Shraddhâ in many places, but hardly mention Bhakti In the Gita, on the other hand, the subject of Bhakti is not only again and again dealt with, but in it, the innate spirit of Bhakti has attained its culmination

Now let us see some of the main points discussed in the Gita. Wherein lies the originality of the Gita, which distinguishes it from all preceding Scriptures? It is this Though before its advent, Yoga, Jnana, Bhakti, etc., had each its strong adherents, they all quarrelled among themselves, each claiming superiority for his own chosen path, no one ever tried to seek for reconciliation among these different paths It was the author of the Gita who for

the first time tried to harmonise these. He took the best from what all the sects then existing had to offer, and threaded them in the Gita. But even where Krishna failed to show a complete reconciliation (Samanvaya) among these warring sects, it was fully accomplished by Ramakrishna Paramahansa in this nineteenth century.

The next is, Nishkâma Karma, or work without desire or attachment. People nowadays understand what is meant by this in various ways. Some say what is implied by being unattached is to become purposeless. If that were its real meaning, then heartless brutes and the walls would be the best exponents of the performance of Nishkama Karma. Many others, again, give the example of Janaka, and wish themselves to be equally recognised as past-masters in the practice of Nishkama Karma. Janaka did not acquire that distinction by bringing forth children, but these people all want to be Janakas, with the sole qualification of being the fathers of a brood of children! No! The true Nishkama Karma (performer of work without desire) is neither to be like a brute, nor to be inert, nor heartless. He is not Tâmasika but of pure Sattva. His heart is so full of love and sympathy that he can embrace the whole world with his love. The world at large cannot generally comprehend his all-embracing love and sympathy.

The reconciliation of the different paths of Dharma, and work without desire or attachment—these are the two special characteristics of the Gita.

Let us now read a little from the second chapter

संजय उवाच ॥

त तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।  
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदन ॥ १ ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।  
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥



क्लैव्य मास्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्सद्युपपद्यते ।

चुद्रं हृदयदीर्घल्य त्यक्तीमिष्ट परतप ॥ १ ॥

“Sanjaya said :

To him who was thus overwhelmed with pity and sorrowing, and whose eyes were dimmed with tears, Madhusudana spoke these words :

The Blessed Lord said :

In such a strait, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Arya-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of heaven ?

Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Prithâ ! Ill doth it become thee Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies !”

In the slokas beginning with तं तथा कृपयाविष्ट . how poetically, how beautifully, has Arjuna's real position been painted ! Then Sri Krishna advises Arjuna ; and in the words क्लैव्य मास्म गमः पार्थ etc , why is he goading Arjuna to fight ? Because it was not that the disinclination of Arjuna to fight arose out of the overwhelming predominance of pure Sattva Guna ; it was all Tamas that brought on this unwillingness The nature of a man of Sattva Guna is, that he is equally calm in all situations in life—whether it be prosperity or adversity. But Arjuna was afraid, he was overwhelmed with pity. That he had the instinct and the inclination to fight is proved by the simple fact that he came to the battle-field with no other purpose than that Frequently in our lives also such things are seen to happen Many people think they are Sâttvika by nature, but they are really nothing but Tamasika Many living in an uncleanly way regard themselves as Paramahamsas ! Why ? Because the Shâstras say that Paramahamsas live like one inert, or mad, or like an unclean spirit. Paramahamsas are compared to children, but here it should be understood that the comparison is one-sided The Paramahamsa and the child are not one and non-different. They only appear

similar, being the two extreme poles, as it were. One has reached to a state beyond Jnanam, and the other has not got even an inkling of Jnanam. The quickest and the gentlest vibrations of light are both beyond the reach of our spectacular vision, but in the one it is intense heat, and in the other it may be said to be almost without any heat. So it is with the opposite qualities of Sattva and Tamas. They seem in some respects no doubt to be the same, but there is a world of difference between them. The Tamoguna loves very much to array itself in the garb of the Sattva. Here, in Arjuna, the mighty warrior, it has come under the guise of Dayâ (pity).

In order to remove this delusion which had overtaken Arjuna, what did the Bhagavân say? As I always preach that you should not decry a man by calling him a sinner but that you should draw his attention to the omnipotent power that is in him, in the same way does the Bhagavan speak to Arjuna. 'नैतत्क्षुद्रपपद्यते'—It doth not befit thee! Thou art that Atman imperishable, beyond all evil. Having forgotten thy real nature, thou hast, by thinking thyself a sinner, as one afflicted with bodily evils and mental grief, thou hast made thyself so—this doth not befit thee! So says the Bhagavan. "क्लैव साद्य गम पार्थ"—Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha. There is in the world neither sin nor misery, neither disease nor grief; if there is anything in the world which can be called sin, it is this—"fear", know that any work which brings out the latent power in thee is Punya (virtue), and that which makes thy body and mind weak is, verily, sin. Shake off this weakness, this faint-heartedness! "क्लैव साद्य गम पार्थ"—Thou art a hero, a Vira, "this is unbecoming of thee."

If you, my sons, can proclaim this message to the world "क्लैव साद्य गम पार्थ नैतत्क्षुद्रपपद्यते"—then all this disease, grief, sin and sorrow will vanish from off the face of the earth in three days. All these ideas of weakness will be

nowhere. Now it is everywhere—this current of the vibration of fear. Reverse the current ; bring in the opposite vibration, and behold the magic transformation ! Thou art omnipotent—go, go to the mouth of the cannon, fear not. Hate not the most abject sinner, look not to his exterior. Turn thy gaze inward, where resides the Param-âtmân. Proclaim to the whole world with trumpet voice, “There is no sin in thee, there is no misery in thee ; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise, awake, and manifest the Divinity within !”

If one reads this one sloka—*कैश्य मागं गमः पार्थ नैतत्स्रग्युप-पद्यते । चूडं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तोत्तिष्ठ पशुतप ॥*—he gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita ; for in this one sloka lies imbedded the whole Message of the Gita

---

# THE STORY OF JADA BHARATA

*(Delivered in California)*

There was a great monarch named Bharata. The land which is called India by foreigners is known to her children as Bhârata Varsha. Now, it is enjoined on every Hindu when he becomes old, to give up all worldly pursuits—to leave the cares of the world, its wealth, happiness and enjoyments, to his son—and retire into the forest, there to meditate upon the Self, which is the only reality in him, and thus break the bonds which bind him to life. King or priest, peasant or servant, man or woman, none is exempt from this duty for all the duties of the householder—of the son, the brother, the husband, the father, the wife, the daughter, the mother, the sister—are but preparations towards that one stage, when all the bonds which bind the soul to matter, are severed asunder for ever.

The great king Bharata in his old age gave over his throne to his son, and retired into the forest. He who had been ruler over millions and millions of subjects, who had lived in marble palaces, inlaid with gold and silver, who had drunk out of jewelled cups—this king built a little cottage with his own hands, made of reeds and grass, on the banks of a river in the Himâlayan forests. There he lived on roots and wild herbs collected by his own hands, and constantly meditated upon Him who is always present in the soul of man. Days, months and years passed. One day, a deer came to drink water near by where the royal sage was meditating. At the same moment, a lion roared, at a little distance off. The deer was so terrified that she, without satisfying her thirst, made a big jump to cross the river. The deer was with young, and this extreme exertion and sudden fright made her give birth to a little fawn, and

immediately after she fell dead. The fawn fell into the water and was being carried rapidly away by the foaming stream, when it caught the eyes of the king. The king rose from his position of meditation and rescuing the fawn from the water, took it to his cottage, made a fire, and with care and attention fondled the little thing back to life. Then the kindly sage took the fawn under his protection, bringing it up on soft grass and fruits. The fawn thrived under the paternal care of the retired monarch, and grew into a beautiful deer. Then, he whose mind had been strong enough to break away from life-long attachment to power, position and family, became attached to the deer which he had saved from the stream. And as he became fonder and fonder of the deer, the less and less he could concentrate his mind upon the Lord. When the deer went out to graze in the forest, if it were late in returning, the mind of the royal sage would become anxious and worried. He would think, "Perhaps my little one has been attacked by some tiger—or perhaps some other danger has befallen it; otherwise, why is it late?"

Some years passed in this way, but one day death came, and the royal sage laid himself down to die. But his mind, instead of being intent upon the Self, was thinking about the deer; and with his eyes fixed upon the sad looks of his beloved deer, his soul left the body. As the result of this, in the next birth he was born as a deer. But no Karma is lost, and all the great and good deeds done by him as a king and sage bore their fruit. This deer was a born Jâtismara, and remembered his past birth, though he was bereft of speech and was living in an animal body. He always left his companions, and was instinctively drawn to graze near hermitages, where oblations were offered and the Upanishads were preached.

After the usual years of a deer's life had been spent, it died, and was next born as the youngest son of a rich Brâhmana. And in that life also, he remembered all his

past, and even in his childhood was determined no more to get entangled in the good and evil of life. The child, as it grew up, was strong and healthy, but would not speak a word, and lived as one inert and insane, for fear of getting mixed up with worldly affairs. His thoughts were always on the Infinite, and he lived only to wear out his past Prârabdha Karma. In course of time the father died and the sons divided the property among themselves, and thinking that the youngest was a dumb, good-for-nothing man, they seized his share. Their charity, however, extended only so far as to give him enough food to live upon. The wives of the brothers were often very harsh to him, putting him to do all the hard work, and if he was unable to do everything they wanted, they would treat him very unkindly. But he showed neither vexation nor fear, and neither did he speak a word. When they persecuted him very much, he would stroll out of the house and sit under a tree, by the hour, until their wrath was appeased, and then he would quietly go home again.

One day, when the wives of the brothers had treated him with more than usual unkindness, Bharata went out of the house, seated himself under the shadow of a tree and rested. Now it happened that the king of the country was passing by, carried in a palanquin on the shoulders of bearers. One of the bearers had unexpectedly fallen ill, and so his attendants were looking about for a man to replace him. They came upon Bharata seated under a tree, and seeing he was a strong young man, they asked him if he would take the place of the sick man in bearing the king's palanquin. But Bharata did not reply. Seeing that he was so able-bodied, the king's servants caught hold of him and placed the pole on his shoulders. Without speaking a word, Bharata went on. Very soon after this, the king remarked that the palanquin was not being evenly carried, and looking out of the palanquin addressed the new bearer, saying "Fool, rest awhile,

if thy shoulders pain thee, rest awhile." Then Bharata laying the pole of the palanquin down, opened his lips for the first time in his life, and spoke : "Whom dost thou, O King, call a fool? Whom dost thou ask to lay down the palanquin? Who dost thou say is weary? Whom dost thou address as 'thou'? If thou meanest, O King, by the word 'thee' this mass of flesh, it is composed of the same matter as thine, it is unconscious, and it knoweth no weariness, it knoweth no pain. If it is the mind, the mind is the same as thine, it is universal. But if the word 'thee' is applied to something beyond that, then it is the Self, the Reality in me, which is the same as in thee, and it is the One in the universe. Dost thou mean, O King, that the Self can ever be weary? that It can ever be tired? that It can ever be hurt? I did not want, O King—this body did not want—to trample upon the poor worms crawling on the road, and therefore, in trying to avoid them, the palanquin moved unevenly. But the Self was never tired, It was never weak; It never bore the pole of the palanquin for It is omnipotent and omnipresent." And so he dwelt eloquently on the nature of the soul, and on the highest knowledge, etc. The king, who was proud of his learning, knowledge and philosophy, alighted from the palanquin, and fell at the feet of Bharata, saying, "I ask thy pardon, O mighty one, I did not know that thou wast a sage, when I asked thee to carry me." Bharata blessed him and departed. He then resumed the even tenor of his previous life. When Bharata left the body, he was freed for ever from the bondage of birth.

---

# THE STORY OF PRAHLADA

*(Delivered in California)*

Hiranyakashipu was the king of the Daityas. The Daityas, though born of the same parentage as the Devas or gods, were always at war with each other. The Daityas had no part in the oblations and offerings of mankind, or in the government of the world and its guidance. But sometimes they waxed strong and drove all the Devas from the heavens, and seized the throne of the gods and ruled for a time. Then the Devas prayed to Vishnu, the Omnipresent Lord of the Universe, and He helped them out of their difficulty. The Daityas were driven out, and once more the gods reigned. Hiranyakashipu, king of the Daityas, in his turn, succeeded in conquering his cousins, the Devas, and seated himself on the throne of the heavens and ruled the three worlds—the middle world, inhabited by men and animals; the heavens inhabited by gods and god-like beings, and the nether world, inhabited by the Daityas. Now, Hiranyakashipu declared himself to be the God of the whole universe and proclaimed that there was no other God but himself, and strictly enjoined that the Omnipotent Vishnu should have no worship offered to Him anywhere, and that all the worship should henceforth be given to himself only.

Hiranyakashipu had a son called Prahlâda. Now, it so happened, that this Prahlada from his infancy was devoted to God. He showed indications of this as a child, and the king of the Daityas, fearing that the evil he wanted to drive away from the world would crop up in his own family, made over his son to two teachers, called Shanda and Amarka, who were very stern disciplinarians, with strict injunctions that Prahlada was never to hear even



the name of Vishnu mentioned. The teachers took the prince to their home, and there he was put to study with other children of his own age. But the little Prahlada, instead of learning from his books, devoted all the time in teaching the other boys how to worship Vishnu. When the teachers found it out, they were frightened, for the fear of the mighty king Hiranyakashipu was upon them, and they tried their best to dissuade the child from such teachings. But Prahlada could no more stop his teaching and worshipping Vishnu than he could stop breathing. To clear themselves, the teachers told the terrible fact to the king, that his son was not only worshipping Vishnu himself, but also spoiling all the other children by teaching them to worship Vishnu.

The monarch became very much enraged when he heard this, and called the boy to his presence. He tried by gentle persuasions to dissuade Prahlada from the worship of Vishnu, and taught him that he, the king, was the only God to worship. But it was to no purpose. The child declared, again and again, that the Omnipresent Vishnu, Lord of the Universe, was the only Being to be worshipped—for even he, the king, held his throne only so long as it pleased Vishnu. The rage of the king knew no bounds, and he ordered the boy to be immediately killed. So the Daityas struck him with pointed weapons, but Prahlada's mind was so intent upon Vishnu that he felt no pain from them.

When his father, the king, saw that it was so, he became frightened, but roused to the worst passions of a Daitya, contrived various diabolical means to kill the boy. He ordered him to be trampled under foot by an elephant. The enraged elephant could not crush the body any more than he could have crushed a block of iron. So this measure also was to no purpose. Then the king ordered the boy to be thrown over a precipice, and this order too was duly carried out, but, as Vishnu resided in the heart

of Prahlada, he came down upon the earth as gently as a flower drops upon the grass. Poison, fire, starvation, throwing into a well, enchantments and other measures were then tried on the child one after another, but to no purpose. Nothing could hurt him in whose heart dwelt Vishnu.

At last, the king ordered the boy to be tied with mighty serpents called up from the nether worlds, and then cast to the bottom of the ocean, where huge mountains were to be piled high upon him, so that in course of time, if not immediately, he might die, and ordered him to be left in this plight. Even though treated in this manner, the boy continued to pray to his beloved Vishnu. "Salutation to Thee, Lord of the Universe. Thou beautiful Vishnu!" Thus thinking and meditating on Vishnu, he began to feel that Vishnu was near him, nay, that He was in his own soul, until he began to feel that he was Vishnu, and that he was everything and everywhere.

As soon as he realised this, all the snake bonds snapped asunder, the mountains were pulverised, the ocean upheaved and he was gently lifted up above the waves, and safely carried to the shore. As Prahlada stood there he forgot that he was a Daitya and had a mortal body: he felt he was the universe and all the powers of the universe emanated from him, there was nothing in nature that could injure him, he himself was the ruler of nature. Time passed thus, in one unbroken ecstasy of bliss, until gradually Prahlada began to remember that he had a body and that he was Prahlada. As soon as he became once more conscious of the body, he saw that God was within and without, and everything appeared to him as Vishnu.

When the King Hiranyakashipu found to his horror that all mortal means of getting rid of the boy who was perfectly devoted to his enemy, the God Vishnu, were powerless, he was at a loss to know what to do. The

king had the boy again brought before him, and tried to persuade him once more to listen to his advice, through gentle means. But Prahlada made the same reply. Thinking, however, that these childish whims of the boy would be rectified with age and further training, he put him again under the charge of the teachers, Shanda and Amarka, asking them to teach him the duties of the king. But those teachings did not appeal to Prahlada, and he spent his time in instructing his school-mates in the path of devotion to the Lord Vishnu.

When his father came to hear about it, he again became furious with rage, and calling the boy to him, threatened to kill him, and abused Vishnu in the worst language. But Prahlada still insisted that Vishnu was the Lord of the Universe, the Beginningless, the Endless, the Omnipotent and the Omnipresent, and as such, He alone was to be worshipped. The king roared with anger and said : "Thou evil one, if thy Vishnu is God omnipresent, why doth he not reside in that pillar yonder?" Prahlada humbly submitted that He did do so. "If so," cried the king, "let him defend thee; I will kill thee with this sword." Thus saying the king rushed at him with sword in hand, and dealt a terrible blow at the pillar. Instantly a thundering voice was heard, and lo and behold, there issued forth from the pillar Vishnu in His awful Nrisingha form—half-lion, half-man! Panic-stricken, the Daityas ran away in all directions, but Hiranyakashipu fought with him long and desperately, till he was finally overpowered and killed.

Then the gods descended from heaven and offered hymns to Vishnu, and Prahlada also fell at His feet and broke forth into exquisite hymns of praise and devotion. And he heard the Voice of God saying: "Ask, Prahlada, ask for anything thou desirest, thou art My favourite child; therefore ask for anything thou mayest wish." And Prahlada choked with feelings replied: "Lord, I

have seen Thee What else can I want? Do thou not tempt me with earthly or heavenly boons " Again the Voice said "Yet ask something, my son " And then Prahlada replied . "That intense love, O Lord, which the ignorant bear to worldly things, may I have the same for Thee, may I have the same intensity of love for Thee, but only for love's sake !"

Then the Lord said : "Prahlada, though My intense devotees never desire for anything, here or hereafter, yet by My command, do thou enjoy the blessings of this world to the end of the present cycle, and perform works of religious merit, with thy heart fixed on Me. And thus in time, after the dissolution of thy body thou shalt attain Me " Thus blessing Prahlada the Lord Vishnu disappeared Then the gods headed by Brahmâ installed Prahlada on the throne of the Daityas, and returned to their respective spheres

---

# THE GREAT TEACHERS OF THE WORLD

*(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena,  
California, February 3, 1900)*

The universe, according to the theory of the Hindus, is moving in cycles of wave forms. It rises, reaches its zenith, then falls and remains in the hollow, as it were, for some time, once more to rise, and so on, in wave after wave and fall after fall. What is true of the universe is true of every part of it. The march of human affairs is like that. The history of nations is like that: they rise and they fall; after the rise comes a fall, again out of the fall comes a rise, with greater power. This motion is always going on. In the religious world the same movement exists. In every nation's spiritual life, there is a fall as well as a rise. The nation goes down, and everything seems to go to pieces. Then, again, it gains strength, rises, a huge wave comes, sometimes a tidal wave—and always on the topmost crest of the wave is a shining soul, the Messenger. Creator and created by turns, he is the impetus that makes the wave rise, the nation rise: at the same time, he is created by the same forces which make the wave, acting and interacting by turns. He puts forth his tremendous power upon society; and society makes him what he is. These are the great world-thinkers. These are the Prophets of the world, the Messengers of life, the Incarnations of God.

Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, that there can be only one Prophet, and that there can be only one Incarnation, but that idea is not true. By studying the lives of all these great Messengers, we find that each, as it were, was destined to play a part, and a part only; that the harmony consists in the sum total, and not

in one note As in the life of races—no race is born to alone enjoy the world None dare say no Each race has a part to play in this divine harmony of nations Each race has its mission to perform, its duty to fulfil The sum total is the great harmony

So, not any one of these Prophets is born to rule the world for ever. None has yet succeeded and none is going to be the ruler for ever Each only contributes a part, and, as to that part, it is true that in the long run every Prophet will govern the world and its destinies

Most of us are born believers in a personal religion. We talk of principles, we think of theories, and that is all right, but every thought and every movement, every one of our actions, shows that we can only understand the principle when it comes to us through a person We can grasp an idea only when it comes to us through a materialised ideal person We can understand the precept only through the example Would to God that all of us were so developed that we would not require any example, would not require any persons But that we are not, and, naturally, the vast majority of mankind have put their souls at the feet of these extraordinary personalities, the Prophets, the Incarnations of God—Incarnations worshipped by the Christians, by the Buddhists, and by the Hindus The Mohammedans from the beginning stood against any such worship They would have nothing to do with worshipping the Prophets or the Messengers, or paying any homage to them, but, practically, instead of one Prophet, thousands upon thousands of saints are being worshipped We cannot go against facts! We are bound to worship personalities, and it is good Remember that word from your great Prophet to the query “Lord, show us the Father” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father Which of us can imagine anything except that He is a man? We can only see Him in and through

humanity The vibration of light is everywhere in this room: why cannot we see it everywhere? You have to see it only in that lamp God is an Omnipresent Principle—everywhere: but we are so constituted at present that we can see Him, feel Him, only in and through a human God. And when these great Lights come, then man realises God. And they come in a different way from what we come. We come as beggars; they come as Emperors. We come here like orphans, as people who have lost their way, and do not know it. What are we to do? We do not know what is the meaning of our lives. We cannot realise it. To-day we are doing one thing, to-morrow another. We are like little bits of straw rocking to and fro in water, like feathers blown about in a hurricane.

But, in the history of mankind, you will find that there come these Messengers, and that from their very birth their mission is found and formed. The whole plan is there, laid down, and you see them swerving not one inch from that. Because they come with a mission, they come with a message, they do not want to reason. Did you ever hear or read of these great Teachers, or Prophets, reasoning out what they taught? No, not one of them did so. They speak direct. Why should they reason? They see the Truth. And not only do they see it, but they show it! If you ask me, "Is there any God?" and I say "Yes," you immediately ask my grounds for saying so, and poor me has to exercise all his powers to provide you with some reason. If you had come to Christ and said: "Is there any God?" he would have said "Yes"; and if you had asked, "Is there any proof?" he would have replied, "Behold the Lord!" And thus, you see, it is a direct perception, and not at all the ratiocination of reason. There is no groping in the dark, but there is the strength of direct vision. I see this table, no amount of reason can take that faith from me. It is a direct percep-

tion. Such is their faith—faith in their ideals, faith in their mission, faith in themselves, above all else. The great shining Ones believe in themselves as nobody else ever does. The people say: “Do you believe in God? Do you believe in a future life? Do you believe in this doctrine, or that dogma?” But here the base is wanting: this belief in oneself. Aye! the man who cannot believe in himself, how can they expect him to believe in anything else? I am not sure of my own existence. One moment I think that I am existing and nothing can destroy me, the next moment I am quaking in fear of death. One minute I think I am immortal; the next minute, a spook appears, and then I don’t know what I am, nor where I am. I don’t know whether I am living or dead. One moment I think that I am spiritual, that I am moral, and the next moment, a blow comes, and I am thrown flat on my back. And why?—I have lost faith in myself—my moral backbone is broken.

But in these great Teachers you will always find this sign, that they have intense faith in themselves. Such intense faith is unique, and we cannot understand it. That is why we try to explain away in various ways what these Teachers speak of themselves, and people invent twenty thousand theories to explain what they say about their realisation. We do not think of ourselves in the same way and, naturally, we cannot understand them.

Then again, when they speak, the world is bound to listen. When they speak, each word is direct; it bursts like a bomb-shell. What is in the word, unless it has the Power behind? What matters it what language you speak, and how you arrange your language? What matters it whether you speak correct grammar or with fine rhetoric? What matters it whether your language is ornamental or not? The question is, whether or not you have anything to give. It is a question of giving and taking, and not listening. Have you anything to give?—that is the first



question. If you have, then, give. Words but convey the gift. it is but one of the many modes. Sometimes we do not speak at all. There is an old Sanskrit verse which says: 'I saw the Teacher sitting under a tree. He was a young man of sixteen and the disciple was an old man of eighty. The preaching of the Teacher was silence, and the doubts of the doubter departed.'

Sometimes they do not speak at all, but yet they convey the Truth from mind to mind. They come to give. They command, they are the Messengers; you have to receive the Command. Do you not remember in your own Scriptures the authority with which Jesus speaks: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It runs through all His utterances, that tremendous faith in His own message. That you find in the life of all these great giants whom the world worships as its Prophets.

These great Teachers are the living Gods on this earth. Whom else should we worship? I try to get an idea of God in my mind, and I find what a false little thing I conceive; it would be a sin to worship that God. I open my eyes and look at the actual life of these great ones of the earth. They are higher than any conception of God that I could ever form. For, what conception of mercy could a man like me form, who would go after a man if he steals anything from me, and send him to jail? And what can be my highest idea of forgiveness? Nothing beyond myself. Which of you can jump out of your own bodies? Which of you can jump out of your own minds? Not one of you. What idea of divine love can you form except what you actually live? What we have never experienced we can form no idea of. So, all my best attempts at forming an idea of God would fail in every case. And here are plain facts, and not idealism, actual facts of love, of mercy, of purity, of which I can have no conception even. What wonder that I should fall at the feet of these men and

worship them as God? And what else can anyone do? I should like to see the man who can do anything else, however much he may talk. Talking is not actuality. Talking about God and the Impersonal, and this and that, is all very good, but these man-Gods are the real Gods of all nations and all races. These divine men have been worshipped and will be worshipped so long as man is man. Therein is our faith, therein is our hope, of a reality. Of what avail is a mere mystical principle!

The purpose and intent of what I have to say to you is this, that I have found it possible in my life to worship all of them, and to be ready for all that are yet to come. A mother recognises her son in any dress in which he may appear before her, and if one does not do so, I am sure she is not the mother of that man. Now, as regards those of you that think that you understand Truth and Divinity and God in only one Prophet in the world, and not in any other, naturally, the conclusion which I draw is that you do not understand Divinity in anybody, you have simply swallowed words, and identified yourself with one sect, just as you would in party politics, as a matter of opinion, but that is no religion at all. There are some fools in this world who use brackish water although there is excellent sweet water near by, because, they say, the brackish-water well was dug by their father. Now, in my little experience I have collected this knowledge that for all the devilry that religion is blamed with, religion is not at all at fault. no religion ever persecuted men, no religion ever burned witches, no religion ever did any of these things. What then incited people to do these things? Politics, but never religion, and if such politics takes the name of religion whose fault is that?

So, when each man stands and says "My Prophet is the only true Prophet," he is not correct—he knows not the alpha of religion. Religion is neither talk, nor theory, nor intellectual consent. It is realisation in the heart of

our hearts, it is touching God, it is feeling, realising that I am a spirit in relation with the Universal Spirit and all its great manifestations. If you have really entered the house of the Father—how can you have seen His children and not know them? And if you do not recognise them, you have not entered the house of the Father. The mother recognises her child in any dress and knows him however disguised. Recognise all the great, spiritual men and women in every age and country, and see that they are not really at variance with one another. Wherever there has been actual religion—this touch of the Divine, the soul coming in direct sense-contact with the Divine—there has always been a broadening of the mind which enables it to see the light everywhere. Now, the Mohammedans are the crudest in this respect, and the most sectarian. Their watchword is, "There is one God and Mahomed is His Prophet." Everything beyond that not only is bad, but must be destroyed forthwith; at a moment's notice, every man or woman who does not exactly believe in that, must be killed; everything that does not belong to this worship must be immediately broken; every book that teaches anything else must be burnt. From the Pacific to the Atlantic, for five hundred years blood ran all over the world. That is Mohammedanism! Nevertheless among these Mohammedans, wherever there was a philosophic man, he was sure to protest against these cruelties. In that he showed the touch of the Divine, and realised a fragment of the truth, he was not playing with his religion, for 'it was not his father's religion he was talking, but spoke the truth direct like a man.

Side by side with the modern theory of evolution, there is another thing: atavism. There is a tendency in us to revert to old ideas in religion. Let us think something new, even if it be wrong. It is better to do that. Why should you not try to hit the mark? We become wiser through failures. Time is infinite. Look at the

wall Did the wall ever tell a lie? It is always the wall. Man tells a lie—and becomes a god, too. It is better to do something ; never mind even if it proves to be wrong ; it is better than doing nothing. The cow never tells a lie, but she remains a cow, all the time Do something! Think some thought ; it doesn't matter whether you are right or wrong. But think something! Because my forefathers did not think this way, shall I sit down quietly and gradually lose my sense of feeling, and my own thinking faculties? I may as well be dead! And what is life worth if we have no living ideas, no convictions of our own about religion? There is some hope for the atheists because though they differ from others, they think for themselves The people who never think anything for themselves are not yet born into the world of religion, they have a mere jelly-fish existence They will not think, they do not care for religion. But the disbeliever, the atheist, cares, and he is struggling So think something! Struggle Godward! Never mind if you fail, never mind if you get hold of a queer theory If you are afraid to be called queer, keep it in your own mind—you need not go and preach it to others. But do something! Struggle Godward! Light must come. If a man feeds me every day of my life, in the long run I shall lose the use of my hands Spiritual death is the result of following each other like a flock of sheep Death is the result of inaction Be active, and wherever there is activity, there must be difference Difference is the sauce of life ; it is the beauty, it is the art of everything Difference makes all beautiful here It is variety that is the source of life, the sign of life Why should we be afraid of it?

Now, we are coming into a position to understand about the Prophets Now, we see that the historical evidence is—apart from the jelly-fish existence in religion—that where there has been any real thinking, any real love for God, the soul has grown Godwards and has got,

as it were, a glimpse now and then, has come into direct perception, even for a second, even once in its life. Immediately, "All doubts vanish for ever, and all the crookedness of the heart is made straight, and all bondages vanish, and the results of action and karma fly ; for He is seen who is the nearest of the near and the farthest of the far " That is religion, that is all of religion ; the rest is mere theory, dogma, so many ways of going to that state of direct perception Now we are fighting over the basket and the fruits have fallen into the ditch

If two men quarrel about religion, just ask them the question. "Have you seen God? Have you seen these things?" One man says that Christ is the only Prophet: well, has he seen Christ? "Has your father seen Him?" "No, Sir " "Has your grandfather seen Him?" "No, Sir " "Have you seen Him?" "No, Sir." "Then what are you quarrelling for? The fruits have fallen into the ditch and you are quarrelling over the basket!" Sensible men and women should be ashamed to go on quarrelling in that way!

These great Messengers and Prophets were great and true Why? Because, each one has come to preach a great idea Take the Prophets of India, for instance. They are the oldest of the founders of religion We take first, Krishna. You who have read the Gita see through the book that the one idea is non-attachment. Remain unattached The heart's love is due to only one. To whom? To Him who never changeth Who is that One? It is God. Do not make the mistake of giving heart to anything that is changing, because that is a sure result. You may give it to a man, but if he dies, misery is the result. You may give it to a friend, but he may turn and become your enemy. If you give it to your husband, he may die with you. You may give it to your wife, and she may die the day after to-morrow. You may give it to your child, and he may die the day after to-morrow. So says

Gita. The Lord is the only One who never changes His love never fails. Wherever we are and whatever we do, He is ever and ever the same merciful, the same loving heart. He never changes, He is never angry, whatever we do. How can God be angry with us? Your babe does many mischievous things. are you angry with that babe? Does not God know what we are going to be? He knows we are all going to be perfect, sooner or later. He has patience, infinite patience. We must love Him, and everyone that lives—only in and through Him. This is the key-note. You must love the wife, but not for the wife's sake. "Never, O Beloved, is the husband loved on account of the husband, but because the Lord is in the husband." The Vedanta philosophy says that even in the love of the husband and wife, although the wife is thinking that she is loving the husband, the real attraction is the Lord, who is present there. He is the only attraction, there is no other, but the wife in most cases does not know that it is so, but ignorantly she is doing the right thing, which is, loving the Lord. Only, when one does it ignorantly, it may bring pain. If one does it knowingly, that is salvation. This is what our Scriptures say. Wherever there is love, wherever there is a spark of joy, know that to be a spark of His presence, because He is Joy, Blessedness and Love itself. Without that there cannot be any love.

This is the trend of Krishna's instruction all the time. He has implanted that upon His race, so that when a Hindu does anything, even if he drinks water—he says, "If there is virtue in it, let it go to the Lord." The Buddhist says, if he does any good deed, "Let the merit of the good deed belong to the world, if there is any virtue in what I do, let it go to the world, and let the evils of the world come to me." The Hindu says he is a great believer in God, the Hindu says that God is omnipotent and that He is the Soul of every soul everywhere, the

Hindu says. If I give all my virtues unto Him, that is the greatest sacrifice, and they will go to the whole universe

Now, this is one phase; and what is the other message of Krishna? "Whosoever lives in the midst of the world, and works, and gives up all the fruit of his action unto the Lord, he is never touched with the evils of the world. Just as the lotus, born under the water, rises up and blossoms above the water, even so is the man who is engaged in the activities of the world, giving up all the fruit of his activities unto the Lord."

Krishna strikes another note as a teacher of intense activity. Work, work, work, day and night, says the Gita. You may ask, "Then, where is peace?—If all through life I am to work like a cart-horse and die in harness, what am I here for?" Krishna says: "Yes, you will find peace. Flying from work is never the way to find peace." Throw off your duties if you can, and go to the top of a mountain; even there, the mind is going—whirling, whirling, whirling. Someone asked a Sannyâsin, "Sir, have you found a nice place? How many years have you been travelling in the Himalayas?" "For forty years," replied the Sannyâsin. "There are many beautiful spots to select from, and to settle down in—why did you not do so?" "Because for these forty years my mind would not allow me to do so." We all say: "Let us find peace"—but the mind will not allow us to do so.

You know the story of the man who caught a Tartar. A soldier was outside the town, and he cried out when he came near the barracks, "I have caught a Tartar." A voice called out, "Bring him in." "He won't come in, sir." "Then you come in." "He won't let me come in, sir." So, in this mind of ours, we have "caught a Tartar": neither can we tone it down, nor will it let us be toned down. We have all "caught Tartars." We all say, be quiet, and peaceful, and so forth. But every baby can

say that, and thinks he can do it. However, that is very difficult. I have tried. I threw overboard all my duties, and fled to the tops of mountains, I lived in caves and deep forests—but all the same, I “caught a Tartar,” because I had my world with me all the time. The “Tartar” is what I have in my own mind, so we must not blame poor people outside. “These circumstances are good, and these are bad,” so we say, while the “Tartar” is here, within, if we can quiet him down, we shall be all right.

Therefore Krishna teaches us not to shirk our duties, but to take them up manfully, and not think of the result. The servant has no right to question. The soldier has no right to reason. Go forward, and do not pay too much attention to the nature of the work you have to do. Ask your mind if you are unselfish. If you are, never mind anything, nothing can resist you! Plunge in! Do the duty at hand. And when you have done this, by degrees you will realise the Truth. “Whosoever in the midst of intense activity finds intense peace, whosoever in the midst of the greatest peace finds the greatest activity, he is a Yogi, he is a great soul, he has arrived at perfection.”

Now, you see that the result of this teaching is that all the duties of the world are sanctified. There is no duty in this world which we have any right to call menial: and each man's work is quite as good as that of the Emperor on his throne.

~ Listen to Buddha's message—a tremendous message. It has a place in our heart. Says Buddha: Root out selfishness, and everything that makes you selfish. Have neither wife, child, nor family. Be not of the world, become perfectly unselfish. A worldly man thinks he will be unselfish, but when he looks at the face of his wife it makes him selfish. The mother thinks she will be perfectly unselfish, but she looks at her baby, and immediately selfishness comes. So with everything in this



world. As soon as selfish desires arise, as soon as some selfish pursuit is followed, immediately the whole man, the real man, is gone . he is like a brute, he is a slave, he forgets his fellow-men. No more does he say, "You first and I afterwards," but it is "I first and let every one else look out for himself "

We find that Krishna's message has also a place for us. Without that message, we cannot move at all . We cannot conscientiously, and with peace, joy and happiness, take up any duty of our lives without listening to the message of Krishna "Be not afraid even if there is evil in your work, for there is no work which has no evil " "Leave it unto the Lord, and 'do not look for the results."

On the other hand, there is a corner in the heart for the other message . Time flies : this world is finite and all misery. With your good food, nice clothes, and your comfortable home, O sleeping man and woman, do you ever think of the millions that are starving and dying? Think of the great fact that it is all misery, misery, misery ! Note the first utterance of the child, when it enters into the world, it weeps . That is the fact—the child weeps This is a place for weeping ! If we listen to the Messenger, we should not be selfish

Behold another Messenger, He of Nazareth. He teaches: "Be ready, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand " I have pondered over the message of Krishna, and am trying to work without attachment, but sometimes I forget. Then, suddenly, comes to me the message of Buddha : "Take care, for everything in the world is evanescent, and there is always misery in this life." I listen to that, and I am uncertain which to accept Then again comes, like a thunderbolt, the message . Be ready, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand Do not delay a moment Leave nothing for to-morrow. Get ready for the final event, which may overtake you immediately,

even now That message, also, has a place, and we acknowledge it. We salute the Messenger, we salute the Lord

And then comes Mohammed, the Messenger of equality You ask, "What good can there be in his religion?" If there were no good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives, because the good alone is strong, therefore it survives How long is the life of an impure man, even in this life? Is not the life of the pure man much longer? Without doubt, for purity is strength, goodness is strength How could Mohammedanism have lived, had there been nothing good in its teaching? There is much good Mohammed was the Prophet of equality, of the brotherhood of man, the brotherhood of all Mussalmans

So we see that each Prophet, each Messenger, has a particular message When you first listen to that message, and then look at his life, you see his whole life stands explained, radiant

Now, ignorant fools start twenty thousand theories, and put forward, according to their own mental development, explanations to suit their own ideas, and ascribe them to these great Teachers They take their teachings and put their misconstruction upon them. With every great Prophet his life is the only commentary Look at his life what he did will bear out the texts Read the Gita, and you will find that it is exactly borne out by the life of the Teacher

Mohammed by his life showed that amongst Mohammedans there should be perfect equality and brotherhood There was no question of race, caste, creed, colour or sex The Sultan of Turkey may buy a Negro from the mart of Africa, and bring him in chains to Turkey, but should he become a Mohammedan, and have sufficient merit and abilities, he might even marry the daughter of the Sultan Compare this with the way in which the Negroes and the

American Indians are treated in this country ! And what do Hindus do ? If one of your missionaries chance to touch the food of an orthodox person, he would throw it away. Notwithstanding our grand philosophy you note our weakness in practice ; but there you see the greatness of the Mohammedan beyond other races, showing itself in equality, perfect equality regardless of race or colour

Will other and greater Prophets come ? Certainly they will come in this world. But do not look forward to that I should better like that each one of you became a Prophet of this real New Testament, which is made up of all the Old Testaments. Take all the old messages, supplement them with your own realisations, and become a Prophet unto others Each one of these Teachers has been great , each has left something for us , they have been our Gods. We salute them, we are their servants ; and, all the same, we salute ourselves , for if they have been Prophets and children of God, we also are the same They reached their perfection, and we are going to attain ours now. Remember the words of Jesus : "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand !" This very moment let every one of us make a staunch resolution : "I will become a Prophet, I will become a messenger of Light, I will become a child of God, nay, I will become a God !"

---

## ON LORD BUDDHA

*(Delivered in Detroit)*

In every religion we find one type of self-devotion particularly developed. The type of working without a motive is most highly developed in Buddhism. Do not mistake Buddhism and Brâhmanism. In this country you are very apt to do so. Buddhism is one of our sects. It was founded by a great man called Gautama, who became disgusted at the eternal metaphysical discussions of his day, and the cumbrous rituals, and more especially with the caste system. Some people say that we are born to a certain state, and therefore we are superior to others who are not thus born. He was also against the tremendous priestcraft. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power, and was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories about God. He was often asked if there was a God, and he answered, he did not know. When asked about right conduct he would reply—Do good and be good. There came five Brahmanas, who asked him to settle their discussion. One said, "Sir, my Book says that God is such and such, and that this is the way to come to God." Another said, "That is wrong, for my Book says such and such, and this is the way to come to God", and so the others. He listened calmly to all of them, and then asked them one by one, "Does any one of your Books say that God becomes angry, that He ever injures any one, that He is impure?" "No, Sir, they all teach that God is pure and good." "Then, my friends, why do you not become pure and good first, that you may know what God is?"

Of course I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysics, for myself. I entirely differ in many respects, but, because I differ, is that any reason why I should not see the beauty of the man? He was the only man who was bereft of all motive power. There were other great men, who all said they were the Incarnations of God Himself, and that those who would believe in them would go to heaven. But what did Buddha say with his dying breath? "None can help you; help yourself, work out your own salvation." He said about himself, "Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky, I, Gautama, have reached that state; you will all reach that too if you struggle for it." Bereft of all motive power, he did not want to go to heaven, did not want money, he gave up his throne and everything else, and went about begging his bread through the streets of India, preaching for the good of men and animals with a heart as wide as the ocean. He was the only man who was ever ready to give up his life for animals, to stop a sacrifice. He once said to a king, "If the sacrifice of a lamb helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man will help you better, so sacrifice me." The king was astonished. And yet this man was without any motive power. He stands as the perfection of the active type, and the very height to which he attained, shows that through the power of work we can also attain to the highest spirituality.

To many the path becomes easier if they believe in God. But the life of Buddha shows that even a man who does not believe in God, has no metaphysics, belongs to no sect, and does not go to any church, or temple, and is a confessed materialist, even he can attain to the highest. We have no right to judge him. I wish I had one infinitesimal part of Buddha's heart. Buddha may or may not have believed in God, that does not matter to me. He reached the same state of perfection to which others come by Bhakti—love of God, Yoga, or Jnâna. Perfection does

not come from belief or faith    Talk does not count for anything    Parrots can do that    Perfection comes through the disinterested performance of action.

---

## CHRIST, THE MESSENGER

*(A lecture delivered at Los Angeles, California, 1900)*

The wave rises on the ocean, and there is a hollow. Again another wave rises, perhaps bigger than the former, to fall down again, similarly, again to rise—driving onward. In the march of events, we notice the rise and fall, and we generally look towards the rise, forgetting the fall. But both are necessary, and both are great. This is the nature of the universe. Whether in the world of our thoughts, the world of our relations in society, or in our spiritual affairs, the same movement of succession, of rises and falls, is going on. Hence great predominances in the march of events, the liberal ideals, are marshalled ahead, to sink down, to digest, as it were, to ruminate over the past—to adjust, to conserve, to gather strength once more for a rise and a bigger rise.

The history of nations, also, has ever been like that. The great soul, the Messenger we are to study this afternoon, came at a period of the history of his race which we may well designate as a great fall. We catch only little glimpses here and there of the stray records that have been kept of his sayings and doings; for, verily it has been well said, that the doings and sayings of that great soul would fill the world if they had all been written down. And the three years of his ministry were like one compressed, concentrated age, which it has taken nineteen hundred years to unfold, and who knows how much longer it will yet take! Little men like you and me are simply the recipients of just a little energy. A few minutes, a few hours, a few years at best, are enough to spend it all, to stretch it out, as it were, to its fullest strength, and then we are gone for ever. But mark this giant that came; centuries and ages

pass, yet the energy that he left upon the world is not yet stretched, nor yet expended to its full. It goes on adding new vigour as the ages roll on.

Now what you see in the life of Christ is the life of all the past. The life of every man is, in a manner, the life of the past. It comes to him through heredity, through surroundings, through education, through his own reincarnation—the past of the race. In a manner, the past of the earth, the past of the whole world is there, upon every soul. What are we, in the present, but a result, an effect, in the hands of that infinite past? What are we but floating wavelets in the eternal current of events, irresistibly moved forward and onward and incapable of rest? But you and I are only little things, bubbles. There are always some giant waves in the ocean of affairs, and in you and me the life of the past race has been embodied only a little, but there are giants who embody, as it were, almost the whole of the past and who stretch out their hands for the future. These are the sign-posts here and there, which point to the march of humanity, these are verily gigantic, their shadows covering the earth—they stand undying, eternal! As it has been said by the same Messenger. “No man hath seen God at any time, but through the Son.” And that is true. And where shall we see God but in the Son? It is true that you and I, and the poorest of us, the meanest even, embody that God, even reflect that God. The vibration of light is everywhere, omnipresent, but we have to strike the light of the lamp before we can see the light. The Omnipresent God of the universe cannot be seen until He is reflected by these giant lamps of the earth—the Prophets, the man-Gods, the Incarnations, the embodiments of God.

We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of light, compare his character with the highest ideal of God that you ever formed, and you will



find that your God falls short of the ideal, and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions. You cannot even form a higher ideal of God than what the actually embodied have practically realised, and set before us as an example. Is it wrong, therefore, to worship these as God? Is it a sin to fall at the feet of these man-Gods, and worship them as the only divine beings in the world? If they are really, actually, higher than all our conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of worship. However much you may try, by struggle, by abstraction, by whatsoever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the world of men, your world is human, your religion is human, and your God is human. And that must be so. Who is not practical enough to take up an actually existing thing, and give up an idea which is only an abstraction, which he cannot grasp, and is difficult of approach except through a concrete medium? Therefore, these Incarnations of God have been worshipped in all ages and in all countries.

We are now going to study a little of the life of Christ, the Incarnation of the Jews. When Christ was born, the Jews were in that state which I call a state of fall between two waves; a state of conservatism, a state where the human mind is, as it were, tired for the time being of moving forward and is taking care only of what it has already, a state when the attention is more bent upon particulars, upon details, than upon the great, general and bigger problems of life, a state of stagnation, rather than a towing ahead, a state of suffering more than of doing. Mark you, I do not blame this state of things. We have no right to criticise it—because had it not been for this fall, the next rise, which was embodied in Jesus of Nazareth, would have been impossible. The Pharisees and Sadducees might have been insincere, they might have been doing things which they ought not to have done, they

might have been even hypocrites, but whatever they were, these factors were the very cause, of which the Messenger was the effect. The Pharisees and Sadducees at one end were the very impetus which came out at the other end as the gigantic brain of Jesus of Nazareth.

The attention to forms, to formulas, to the everyday details of religion, and to rituals, may sometimes be laughed at, but nevertheless, within them is strength. Many times in the rushing forward we lose much strength. As a fact the fanatic is stronger than the liberal man. Even the fanatic, therefore, has one great virtue, he conserves energy, a tremendous amount of it. As with the individual, so with the race, energy is gathered to be conserved. Hemmed in all around by external enemies, driven to focus in a centre by the Romans, by the Hellenic tendencies in the world of intellect, by waves from Persia, India and Alexandria—hemmed in physically, mentally, and morally—there stood the race with an inherent, conservative, tremendous strength, which their descendants have not lost even to-day. And the race was forced to concentrate and focus all its energies upon Jerusalem and Judaism. But all power when once gathered cannot remain collected, it must expend and expand itself. There is no power on earth which can be kept long confined within a narrow limit. It cannot be kept compressed too long to allow of expansion at a subsequent period.

This concentrated energy amongst the Jewish race found its expression at the next period, in the rise of Christianity. The gathered streams collected into a body. Gradually, all the little streams joined together, and became a surging wave on the top of which we find standing out the character of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, every Prophet is a creation of his own times, the creation of the past of his race, he, himself, is the creator of the future. The cause of to-day is the effect of the past and the cause

for the future. In this position stands the Messenger. In him is embodied all that is the best and greatest in his own race, the meaning, the life, for which that race has struggled for ages, and he, himself, is the impetus for the future, not only to his own race but to unnumbered other races of the world.

We must bear another fact in mind: that my view of the great Prophet of Nazareth would be from the standpoint of the Orient. Many times you forget, also, that the Nazarene himself was an Oriental of Orientals. With all your attempts to paint him with blue eyes and yellow hair, the Nazarene was still an Oriental. All the similes, the imageries, in which the Bible is written—the scenes, the locations, the attitudes, the groups, the poetry and symbol,—speak to you of the Orient of the bright sky, of the heat, of the sun, of the desert, of the thirsty men and animals, of men and women coming with pitchers on their heads to fill them at the wells; of the flocks, of the ploughmen of the cultivation that is going on around; of the water-mill and wheel, of the mill-pond, of the mill-stones—all these are to be seen to-day in Asia.

The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. The voice of Europe is the voice of politics. Each is great in its own sphere. The voice of Europe is the voice of ancient Greece. To the Greek mind, his immediate society was all in all. Beyond that, it is Barbarian—none but the Greek has the right to live. Whatever the Greeks do is right and correct, whatever else there exists in the world is neither right nor correct, nor should be allowed to live. It is intensely human in its sympathies, intensely natural, intensely artistic, therefore. The Greek lives entirely in this world. He does not care to dream. Even his poetry is practical. His gods and goddesses are not only human beings, but intensely human, with all human passions and feelings almost the same as with any of us. He loves what is beautiful, but, mind you, it is

always external nature the beauty of the hills, of the snows, of the flowers, the beauty of forms and of figures, the beauty in the human face, and, more often, in the human form—that is what the Greeks liked. And the Greeks being the teachers of all subsequent Europeanism, the voice of Europe is Greek.

There is another type in Asia. Think of that vast, huge continent, whose mountain-tops go beyond the clouds, almost touching the canopy of heaven's blue, a rolling desert of miles upon miles, where a drop of water cannot be found, neither will a blade of grass grow, interminable forests, and gigantic rivers rushing down into the sea. In the midst of all these surroundings, the Oriental love of the beautiful and of the sublime developed itself in another direction. It looked inside, and not outside. There is also the thirst for nature, and there is also the same thirst for power; there is also the same thirst for excellence, the same idea of the Greek and Barbarian, but it has extended over a huge circle. In Asia, even to-day, birth or colour or language never makes a race. That which makes a race is its religion. We are all Christians; we are all Mohammedans, we are all Hindus, or all Buddhists. No matter if a Buddhist is a Chinaman, or is a man from Persia, they think that they are brothers, because of their professing the same religion. Religion is the tie, the unity of humanity. And then again, the Oriental, for the same reason, is a visionary, is a born dreamer. The ripples of the waterfalls, the songs of the birds, the beauties of the sun and moon and the stars and the whole earth, are pleasant enough, but they are not sufficient for the Oriental mind. He wants to dream a dream beyond. He wants to go beyond the present. The present, as it were, is nothing to him. The Orient has been the cradle of the human race for ages, and all the vicissitudes of fortune are there. Kingdoms succeeding kingdoms, empires succeeding empires, human power,

glory and wealth, all rolling down there : a Golgotha of power and learning That is the Orient : a Golgotha of power, of kingdoms, of learning. No wonder, the Oriental mind looks with contempt upon the things of this world and naturally wants to see something that changeth not, something which dieth not, something which in the midst of this world of misery and death is eternal, blissful, undying. An Oriental Prophet never tires of insisting upon these ideals , and, as for Prophets, you may also remember that without one exception, all the Messengers were Orientals

We see, therefore, in the life of this great Messenger of life, the first watchword. "Not this life, but something higher" , and, like the true son of the Orient, he is practical in that You people of the West are practical in your own department, in military affairs, and in managing political circles and other things Perhaps the Oriental is not practical in those ways, but he is practical in his own field : he is practical in religion If one preaches a philosophy, to-morrow there are hundreds who will struggle their best to make it practical in their lives If a man preaches that standing on one foot would lead to salvation, he will immediately get five hundred to stand on one foot. You may call it ludicrous , but, mark you, beneath that is their philosophy—that intense practicality In the West, plans of salvation mean intellectual gymnastics, plans which are never worked out, never brought into practical life. In the West, the preacher who talks the best is the greatest preacher

So, we find Jesus of Nazareth, in the first place, the true son of the Orient, intensely practical He has no faith in this evanescent world and all its belongings. No need of text-torturing, as is the fashion in the West in modern times, no need of stretching out texts until they will not stretch any more. Texts are not India rubber, and even that has its limits Now, no making of religion to pander

° to the sense vanity of the present day ! Mark you, let us all be honest If we cannot follow the ideal, let us confess our weakness, but not degrade it , let not any try to pull it down One gets sick at heart at the different accounts of the life of the Christ that Western people give I do not know what he was or what he was not ! One would make him a great politician , another, perhaps, would make of him a great military general , another, a great patriotic Jew, and so on Is there any warrant in the books for all such assumptions ? The best commentary on the life of a great teacher is his own life “The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head ” That is what Christ says is the only way to salvation , he lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth and ashes that we cannot do that We still have fondness for “me” and “mine ” We want property, money, wealth Woe unto us ! Let us confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of Humanity ! He had no family ties But do you think that that Man had any physical ideas in him ? Do you think that this mass of light, this God and not-man, came down to earth, to be the brother of animals ? And yet, people make him preach all sorts of things He had no sex ideas ! He was a soul ! Nothing but a soul, just working a body, for the good of humanity , and that was all his relation to the body In the soul there is no sex The disembodied soul has no relationship to the animal, no relationship to the body The ideal may be far away beyond us But never mind, keep to the ideal Let us confess that it is our ideal, but we cannot approach it yet

He had no other occupation in life , no other thought except that one, that he was a Spirit He was a disembodied, unfettered, unbound Spirit And not only so, but he, with his marvellous vision, had found that every man and woman, whether Jew or Gentile, whether rich or poor, whether saint or sinner, was the embodiment of the same

undying Spirit as himself. Therefore, the one work his whole life showed, was calling upon them to realise their own spiritual nature. Give up, he says, these superstitious dreams that you are low and that you are poor. Think not that you are trampled upon and tyrannised over as if you were slaves, for within you is something that can never be tyrannised over, never be trampled upon, never be troubled, never be killed. You are all Sons of God, Immortal Spirit "Know", he declared, "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you" "I and my Father are one." Dare you stand up and say, not only that "I am the Son of God" but I shall also find in my heart of hearts that "I and my Father are one" That was what Jesus of Nazareth said He never talks of this world and of this life He has nothing to do with it, except that he wants to get hold of the world as it is, give it a push and drive it forward and onward until the whole world has reached to the effulgent Light of God, until everyone has realised his spiritual nature, until death is vanished and misery banished

We have read the different stories that have been written about him, we know the scholars and their writings, and the higher criticism and we know all that has been done by study We are not here to discuss how much of the New Testament is true, we are not here to discuss how much of that life is historical. It does not matter at all whether the New Testament was written within five hundred years of his birth, nor does it matter, even, how much of that life is true But there is something behind it, something we want to imitate. To tell a lie, you have to imitate a truth, and that truth is a fact. You cannot imitate that which never existed You cannot imitate that which you never perceived But there must have been a nucleus, a tremendous power that came down, a marvellous manifestation of spiritual power,—and of that we are speaking It stands there Therefore, we are not

afraid of all the criticisms of the scholars. If I, as an Oriental, have to worship Jesus of Nazareth, there is only one way left to me, that is, to worship him as God and nothing else. Have we no right to worship him in that way, do you mean to say? If we bring him down to our own level and simply pay him a little respect, as a great man, why should we worship at all? Our Scriptures say, "These great children of Light, who manifest the Light themselves, who are Light themselves, they being worshipped, become, as it were, one with us and we become one with them."

For, you see, in three ways man perceives God. At first the undeveloped intellect of the uneducated man sees God as far away, up in the heavens somewhere, sitting on a throne, as a great Judge. He looks upon Him as a fire, as a terror. Now, that is good, for there is nothing bad in it. You must remember that humanity travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, it may be, if you like it better, from lower truth to higher truth, but never from error to truth. Suppose you start from here and travel towards the sun in a straight line. From here the sun looks only small in size. Suppose you go forward a million miles, the sun will be much bigger. At every stage the sun will become bigger and bigger. Suppose twenty thousand photographs had been taken of the same sun, from different standpoints, these twenty thousand photographs will all certainly differ from one another. But can you deny that each is a photograph of the same sun? So all forms of religion, high or low, are just different stages toward that eternal state of Light, which is God Himself. Some embody a lower view, some a higher, and that is all the difference. Therefore, the religions of the unthinking masses all over the world must be, and have always been, of a God who is outside of the universe, who lives in heaven, who governs from that place, who is a punisher of the bad and a rewarder of the good, and so on. As man



advanced spiritually, he began to feel that God was omnipresent, that He must be in him, that He must be everywhere, that He was not a distant God, but clearly the Soul of all souls. As my soul moves my body, even so is God the mover of my soul. Soul within soul. And a few individuals who had developed enough and were pure enough, went still further, and at last found God. As the New Testament says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And they found at last that they and the Father were one.

You find that all these three stages are taught by the Great Teacher in the New Testament. Note the Common Prayer he taught: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," and so on—a simple prayer, a child's prayer. Mark you, it is the "Common Prayer" because it is intended for the uneducated masses. To a higher circle, to those who had advanced a little more, he gave a more elevated teaching: "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Do you remember that? And then, when the Jews asked him who he was, he declared that he and his Father were one, and the Jews thought that that was blasphemy. What did he mean by that? This has been also told by your old Prophets: "Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High." Mark the same three stages. You will find that it is easier for you to begin with the first and end with the last.

The Messenger came to show the path: that the Spirit is not in forms, that it is not through all sorts of vexatious and knotty problems of philosophy that you know the Spirit. Better that you had no learning, better that you never read a book in your life. These are not at all necessary for salvation—neither wealth, nor position, nor power, not even learning—but what is necessary is that one thing, purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart," for the Spirit in its own nature is pure. How can it be otherwise? It is of God, it has come from God. In the language

of the Bible, "It is the breath of God " In the language of the Koran, "It is the soul of God." Do you mean to say that the Spirit of God can ever be impure? But, alas, it has been, as it were, covered over with the dust and dirt of ages, through our own actions, good and evil. Various works which were not correct, which were not true, have covered the same Spirit with the dust and dirt of the ignorance of ages. It is only necessary to clear away the dust and dirt, and then the Spirit shines immediately. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God " "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you " Where goest thou to seek for the Kingdom of God? asks Jesus of Nazareth, when it is there, within you. Cleanse the Spirit, and it is there. It is already yours. How can you get what is not yours? It is yours by right. You are the heirs of immortality, sons of the Eternal Father.

This is the great lesson of the Messenger, and another which is the basis of all religions, is renunciation. How can you make the Spirit pure? By renunciation. A rich young man asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me " And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. We are all more or less like that. The Voice is ringing in our ears day and night. In the midst of our pleasures and joys, in the midst of worldly things, we think that we have forgotten everything else. Then comes a moment's pause and the Voice rings in our ears. "Give up all that thou hast and follow Me " "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it " For whoever gives up this life for His sake, finds the life immortal. In the midst of all our weakness there is a moment of pause and the Voice

rings "Give up all that thou hast; give it to the poor and follow Me" This is the one ideal he preaches, and this has been the ideal preached by all the great Prophets of the world renunciation What is meant by renunciation? That there is only one ideal in morality unselfishness Be selfless. The ideal is perfect unselfishness When a man is struck on the right cheek, he turns the left also When a man's coat is carried off, he gives away his cloak also.

We should work in the best way we can, without dragging the ideal down. Here is the ideal. When a man has no more self in him, no possession, nothing to call "me" or "mine," has given himself up entirely, destroyed himself as it were—in that man is God Himself, for in him self-will is gone, crushed out, annihilated That is the ideal man We cannot reach that state yet, yet, let us worship the ideal, and slowly, struggle to reach the ideal, though maybe with faltering steps. It may be to-morrow, or it may be a thousand years hence, but that ideal has to be reached For it is not only the end, but also the means To be unselfish, perfectly selfless, is salvation itself, for the man within dies, and God alone remains

One more point All the teachers of humanity are unselfish Suppose Jesus of Nazareth was teaching, and a man came and told him "What you teach is beautiful I believe that it is the way to perfection and I am ready to follow it, but I do not care to worship you as the only begotten Son of God" What would be the answer of Jesus of Nazareth? "Very well, brother, follow the ideal and advance in your own way. I do not care whether you give me the credit for the teaching or not I am not a shopkeeper I do not trade in religion I only teach truth, and truth is nobody's property Nobody can patent truth Truth is God Himself Go forward." But what the disciples say nowadays is: "No matter whether you

practise the teachings or not, do you give credit to the Man? If you credit the Master, you will be saved, if not, there is no salvation for you." And thus the whole teaching of the Master is degenerated and all the struggle and fight is for the personality of the Man. They do not know that in imposing that difference, they are, in a manner, bringing shame to the very Man they want to honour—the very Man that would have shrunk with shame from such an idea. What did he care if there was one man in the world that remembered him or not? He had to deliver his message, and he gave it. And if he had twenty thousand lives he would give them all up for the poorest man in the world. If he had to be tortured millions of times, for a million despised Samaritans, and if for each one of them the sacrifice of his own life would be the only condition of salvation, he would have given his life. And all this without wishing to have his name known even to a single person. Quiet, unknown, silent, would he work, just as the Lord works. Now, what would the disciple say? He will tell you that you may be a perfect man, perfectly unselfish, but unless you give the credit to our Teacher, to our Saint, it is of no avail. Why? What is the origin of this superstition, this ignorance? The disciple thinks that the Lord can manifest Himself only once. There lies the whole mistake. God manifests Himself to you in man. But throughout nature, what happens once must have happened before, and must happen in future. There is nothing in nature which is not bound by law, and that means that whatever happens once, must go on and must have been going on.

In India they have the same idea of the Incarnations of God. One of their great Incarnations, Krishna, whose grand Sermon, the Bhagavad-Gita, some of you might have read, says—"Though I am unborn, of changeless nature and Lord of beings, yet subjugating My Prakriti, I come into being by My own Mâyâ. Whenever virtue subsides

and immorality prevails, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being, in every age " Whenever the world goes down, the Lord comes to help it forward, and so He does from time to time and place to place In another passage He speaks to this effect Wherever thou findest a great soul of immense power and purity struggling to raise humanity, know that he is born of My splendour, that I am there working through him

Let us, therefore, find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth but in all the great Ones that have preceded him, in all that came after him, and all that are yet to come Our worship is unbounded and free. They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God They are all pure and unselfish, they struggled, and gave up their lives for us, poor human beings They each and all suffer vicarious atonement for every one of us, and also for all that are to come hereafter.

In a sense you are all Prophets, every one of you is a Prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great Prophets were giants—they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we are doing the same task, in our little circles, in our little homes, we are bearing our little crosses There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his own cross But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the divine For, know for certain, that the moment the touch of the divine is lost there would be annihilation And because none can be annihilated, there is always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and

degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant touch with the divine.

Our salutations go to all the past Prophets, whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime or creed ! Our salutations go to all those God-like men and women who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth, colour or race ! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future—living Gods—to work unselfishly for our descendants !

---

## MY MASTER

*(Delivered in New York)*

"Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to help mankind," declares Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita. Whenever this world of ours, on account of growth, on account of added circumstances, requires a new adjustment, a wave of power comes, and as a man is acting on two planes, the spiritual and the material, waves of adjustment come on both planes. On the one side, of the adjustment on the material plane, Europe has mainly been the basis during modern times, and of the adjustment on the other, the spiritual plane, Asia has been the basis throughout the history of the world. To-day, man requires one more adjustment on the spiritual plane, to-day when material ideas are at the height of their glory and power, to-day, when man is likely to forget his divine nature, through his growing dependence on matter, and is likely to be reduced to a mere money-making machine, an adjustment is necessary, the voice has spoken, and the power is coming to drive away the clouds of gathering materialism. The power has been set in motion which, at no distant date, will bring unto mankind once more the memory of its real nature, and again the place from which this power will start will be Asia.

This world of ours is on the plan of the division of labour. It is vain to say that one man shall possess everything. Yet how childish we are! The baby in its ignorance thinks that its doll is the only possession that is to be coveted in this whole universe. So a nation which is great in the possession of material power thinks that that is all that is to be coveted, that that is all that is meant by progress, that that is all that is meant by civilisation, and if

there are other nations which do not care for possession, and do not possess that power, they are not fit to live, their whole existence is useless! On the other hand, another nation may think that mere material civilisation is utterly useless. From the Orient came the voice which once told the world that if a man possesses everything that is under the sun and does not possess spirituality, what avails it? This is the Oriental type, the other is the Occidental type.

Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonising, the mingling of these two ideals. To the Oriental, the world of Spirit is as real as to the Occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the Oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for, in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the Occidental he is a dreamer, to the Oriental, the Occidental is a dreamer, playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. Each calls the other a dreamer. But the Oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy, and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this will claim that happiness is in the machine, but it is always in the mind. The man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else. And what, after all, is this power of machinery? Why should a man who can send a current of electricity through a wire be called a very great man, and a very intelligent man? Does not nature do a million times more than that every moment? Why not then fall down and worship nature? What avails it if you have power over the whole of the world, if you have mastered every atom in the universe? That will not make you happy unless you have the power of happiness in yourself, until you have conquered yourself. Man is born to conquer nature,



it is true, but the Occidental means by "nature," only physical or external nature. It is true that external nature is majestic, with its mountains, and oceans, and rivers, and with its infinite powers and varieties. Yet there is a more majestic internal nature of man, higher than the sun, moon and stars, higher than this earth of ours, higher than the physical universe, transcending these little lives of ours ; and it affords another field of study. There the Orientals excel, just as the Occidentals excel in the other. Therefore it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn about the Spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.

I am going to present before you the life of one man who has put in motion such a wave in India. But before going into the life of this man, I will try to present before you the secret of India, what India means. If those whose eyes have been blinded by the glamour of material things, whose whole dedication of life is to eating and drinking and enjoying, whose ideal of possession is lands and gold, whose ideal of pleasure is that of the senses, whose God is money, and whose goal is a life of ease and comfort in this world and death after that, whose minds never look forward, and who rarely think of anything higher than the sense objects in the midst of which they live—if such as these go to India, what do they see? Poverty, squalor, superstition, darkness, hideousness everywhere. Why? Because in their minds enlightenment means dress, education, social politeness. Whereas Occidental nations have used every effort to improve their material position, India has done differently. There, live the only men in the world who, in the whole history of

humanity, never went beyond their frontiers to conquer any one, who never coveted that which belonged to any one else, whose only fault was that their lands were so fertile, and they accumulated wealth by the hard labour of their hands, and so tempted other nations to come and despoil them. They are contented to be despoiled, and to be called barbarians, and in return they want to send to this world visions of the Supreme, to lay bare for the world the secrets of human nature, to rend the veil that conceals the real man, because they know the dream, because they know that behind this materialism lives the real, divine nature of man which no sin can tarnish, no crime can spoil, no lust can taint; which fire cannot burn, nor water wet, which heat cannot dry, nor death kill ; and to them this true nature of man is as real as is any material object to the senses of an Occidental.

Just as you are brave to jump at the mouth of a cannon with a hurrah, just as you are brave in the name of patriotism, to stand up and give up your lives for your country, so are they brave in the name of God. There it is that when a man declares that this is a world of ideas, that it is all a dream, he casts off clothes and property to demonstrate that what he believes and thinks is true. There it is that a man sits on the bank of a river, when he has known that life is eternal, and wants to give up his body just as nothing, just as you can give up a bit of straw. Therein lies their heroism, that they are ready to face death as a brother because they are convinced that there is no death for them. Therein lies the strength that has made them invincible through hundreds of years of oppression and foreign invasion and tyranny. The nation lives to-day, and in that nation even in the days of the direst disaster, spiritual giants have never failed to arise. Asia produces giants in spirituality, just as the Occident produces giants in politics, giants in

science In the beginning of the present century, when Western influence began to pour into India, when Western conquerors, sword in hand, came to demonstrate to the children of the sages that they were mere barbarians, a race of dreamers, that their religion was but mythology, and god and soul and everything they had been struggling for, were mere words without meaning, that the thousands of years of struggle, the thousands of years of endless renunciation, had all been in vain the question began to be agitated among young men at the universities whether the whole national existence up to then had been a failure, whether they must begin anew on the Occidental plan, tear up their old books, burn their philosophies, drive away their preachers, and break down their temples Did not the Occidental conqueror, the man who demonstrated his religion with sword and gun, say, that all the old ways were mere superstition and idolatry? Children brought up and educated in the new schools started on the Occidental plan, drank in these ideas, from their childhood, and it is not to be wondered at that doubts arose But instead of throwing away superstition and making a real search after truth, the test of truth became, "What does the West say?" The priests must go, the Vedas must be burned, because the West has said so Out of the feeling of unrest thus produced, there arose a wave of so-called reform in India.

If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are necessary The first is to feel Do you really feel for your brothers? Do you really feel that there is so much misery in the world, so much ignorance and superstition? Do you really feel that men are your brothers? Does this idea come into your whole being? Does it run with your blood? Does it tingle in your veins? Does it course through every nerve and filament of your body? Are you full of that idea of sympathy? If you are, that is only the first step You must think next if you have found any

remedy The old ideas may be all superstition, but in and round these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth Have you discovered means by which to keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? If you have done that, that is only the second step, one more thing is necessary What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame, or power? Are you really sure that you can stand to your ideals, and work on, even if the whole world wants to crush you down? Are you sure you know what you want, and will perform your duty, and that alone, even if your life is at stake? Are you sure that you will persevere so long as life endures, so long as there is one pulsation left in the heart? Then you are a real reformer, you are a teacher, a Master, a blessing to mankind But man is so impatient, so short-sighted! He has not the patience to wait, he has not the power to see He wants to rule, he wants results immediately Why? He wants to reap the fruits himself, and does not really care for others Duty for duty's sake is not what he wants "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof," says Krishna Why cling to results? Ours are the duties Let the fruits take care of themselves But man has no patience He takes up any scheme The larger number of would-be reformers all over the world can be classed under this heading

As I have said, the idea of reform came to India when it seemed as if the wave of materialism that had invaded her shores would sweep away the teachings of the sages But the nation had borne the shocks of a thousand such waves of change This one was mild in comparison Wave after wave had flooded the land, breaking and crushing everything for hundreds of years The sword had flashed, and "Victory unto Allah" had rent the skies of India, but these floods subsided, leaving the national ideals unchanged

The Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless it stands, and it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up their spirituality. Beggars they may remain, poor and poverty-stricken, dirt and squalor may surround them perhaps throughout all time, but let them not give up their God, let them not forget that they are the children of the sages. Just as in the West, even the man in the street wants to trace his descent from some robber-baron of the Middle Ages, so in India, even an Emperor on the throne wants to trace his descent from some beggar-sage in the forest, from a man who wore the bark of a tree, lived upon the fruits of the forest and communed with God. That is the type of descent we want, and so long as holiness is thus supremely venerated, India cannot die.

Many of you perhaps have read the article by Prof. Max Muller in a recent issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, headed "A Real Mahâtman." The life of Sri Ramakrishna is interesting, as it was a living illustration of the ideas that he preached. Perhaps it will be a little romantic for you who live in the West, in an atmosphere entirely different from that of India. For the methods and manners in the busy rush of life in the West vary entirely from those of India. Yet perhaps it will be of all the more interest for that, because it will bring into a newer light, things about which many have already heard.

It was while reforms of various kinds were being inaugurated in India that a child was born of poor Brâhman parents on the eighteenth of February, 1836, in one of the remote villages of Bengal. The father and mother were very orthodox people. The life of a really orthodox Brahman is one of continuous renunciation. Very few things can he do, and over and beyond them the orthodox Brahman must not occupy himself with any secular business. At the same time he must not receive gifts from everybody. You may imagine how rigorous that life

becomes You have heard of the Brahmans and their priestcraft many times, but very few of you have ever stopped to ask what makes this wonderful band of men the rulers of their fellows. They are the poorest of all the classes in the country, and the secret of their power lies in their renunciation. They never covet wealth. Theirs is the poorest priesthood in the world, and therefore the most powerful. Even in this poverty, a Brahman's wife will never allow a poor man to pass through the village without giving him something to eat. That is considered the highest duty of the mother in India, and because she is the mother it is her duty to be served last; she must see that every one is served before her turn comes. That is why the mother is regarded as God in India. This particular woman, the mother of our subject, was the very type of a Hindu mother. The higher the caste, the greater the restrictions. The lowest caste people can eat and drink anything they like, but as men rise in the social scale, more and more restrictions come, and when they reach the highest caste, the Brahman, the hereditary priesthood of India, their lives, as I have said, are very much circumscribed. Compared to Western manners, their lives are of continuous asceticism. The Hindus are perhaps the most exclusive nation in the world. They have the same great steadiness as the English, but much more amplified. When they get hold of an idea they carry it out to its very conclusion, and they keep hold of it generation after generation until they make something out of it. Once give them an idea and it is not easy to take it back, but it is hard to make them grasp a new idea.

The orthodox Hindus therefore are very exclusive, living entirely within their own horizon of thought and feeling. Their lives are laid down in our old books in every little detail, and the least detail is grasped with almost adamant firmness by them. They would starve

rather than eat a meal cooked by the hands of a man not belonging to their own small section of caste. But withal, they have intensity and tremendous earnestness. That force of intense faith and religious life occurs often among the orthodox Hindus, because their very orthodoxy comes from a tremendous conviction that it is right. We may not all think that what they hold on to with such perseverance is right, but to them it is. Now, it is written in our books that a man should always be charitable even to the extreme. If a man starves himself to death to help another man, to save that man's life, it is all right ; it is even held that a man ought to do that. And it is expected of a Brahman to carry this idea out to the very extreme. Those who are acquainted with the literature of India will remember a beautiful old story about this extreme charity, how a whole family, as related in the Mahâbhârata, starved themselves to death and gave their last meal to a beggar. This is not an exaggeration, for such things still happen. The character of the father and the mother of my Master was very much like that. Very poor they were, and yet many a time the mother would starve herself a whole day to help a poor man. Of them this child was born, and he was a peculiar child from very boyhood. He remembered his past from his birth, and was conscious for what purpose he came into the world, and every power was devoted to the fulfilment of that purpose.

While he was quite young his father died and the boy was sent to school. A Brahman's boy must go to school, the caste restricts him to a learned profession only. The old system of education in India, still prevalent in many parts of the country, especially in connection with Sannyâsins, is very different from the modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge must be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without charge, and not only so, most of

them gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers the wealthy families on certain occasions, such as a marriage festival, or at the ceremonies for the dead, made gifts to them. They were considered the first and foremost claimants to certain gifts, and they in their turn had to maintain their students. So whenever there is a marriage, especially in a rich family, these professors are invited, and they attend and discuss various subjects. This boy went to one of these gatherings of professors, and the professors were discussing various topics, such as logic or astronomy, subjects much beyond his age. The boy was peculiar, as I have said, and he gathered this moral out of it,—that this is the outcome of all their knowledge. Why are they fighting so hard? It is simply for money, the man who can show the highest learning here will get the best pair of cloth, and that is all these people are struggling for. I will not go to school any more. And he did not—that was the end of his going to school. But this boy had an elder brother, a learned professor, who took him to Calcutta, however, to study with him. After a short time the boy became fully convinced that the aim of all secular learning was mere material advancement, and nothing more, and he resolved to give up study and devote himself solely to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. The father being dead, the family was very poor, and this boy had to make his own living. He went to a place near Calcutta and became a temple priest. To become a temple priest is thought very degrading to a Brahman. Our temples are not churches in your sense of the word, they are not places for public worship, for, properly speaking, there is no such thing as public worship in India. Temples are erected mostly by rich persons as a meritorious religious act.

If a man has much property he wants to build a temple. In that, he puts a symbol or an image of an Incarnation of God, and dedicates it to worship in the name



of God The worship is akin to that which is conducted in Roman Catholic churches, very much like the Mass, reading certain sentences from the Sacred Books, waving a light before the image, and treating the image in every respect as we treat a great man This is all that is done in the temple. The man who goes to a temple is not considered thereby a better man than he who never goes. More properly, the latter is considered the more religious man, for religion in India is to each man his own private affair In the house of every man there is either a little chapel, or a room set apart, and there he goes morning and evening, sits down in a corner, and there does his worship. And this worship is entirely mental, for another man does not hear or know what he is doing He sees him only sitting there, and perhaps moving his fingers in a peculiar fashion, or closing his nostrils and breathing in a peculiar manner Beyond that, he does not know what his brother is doing, even his wife, perhaps, will not know. Thus, all worship is conducted in the privacy of his own home. Those who cannot afford to have a chapel go to the banks of a river, or a lake, or the sea if they live at the seaside, but people sometimes go to worship in a temple by making salutation to the image There their duty to the temple ends. Therefore, you see, it has been held from the most ancient times in our country, legislated upon by Manu, that it is a degenerating occupation to become a temple priest Some of the books say it is so degrading as to make a Brahman worthy of reproach There is another idea behind it, that, just as with education, but in a far more intense sense with religion, the fact that temple priests take fees for their work is making merchandise of sacred things So you may imagine the feelings of that boy when he was forced through poverty to take up the only occupation open to him, that of a temple priest.

There have been various poets in Bengal whose songs have passed down to the people; they are sung in the

streets of Calcutta and in every village Most of these are religious songs, and their one central idea, which is perhaps peculiar to the religions of India, is the idea of realisation There is not a book in India on religion which does not breathe this idea Man must realise God, feel God, see God, talk to God. That is religion The Indian atmosphere is full of stories of saintly persons having visions of God Such doctrines form the basis of the religion, and all these ancient books and Scriptures are the writings of persons who came into direct contact with spiritual facts These books were not written for the intellect, nor can any reasoning understand them, because they were written by men who saw the things of which they wrote, and they can be understood only by men who have raised themselves to the same height They say there is such a thing as realisation even in this life, and it is open to every one, and religion begins with the opening of this faculty, if I may call it so This is the central idea in all religions and this is why we may find one man with the most finished oratorical powers, or the most convincing logic, preaching the highest doctrines and yet unable to get people to listen to him, while we may find another, a poor man, who scarcely can speak the language of his own motherland, yet half the nation worships him in his own lifetime as God When in India the idea somehow or other gets abroad that a man has raised himself to that state of realisation, that religion is no more a matter of conjecture to him, that he is no more groping in the dark in such momentous questions as religion, the immortality of the soul, and God, people come from all quarters to see him and gradually they begin to worship him

In the temple was an image of the "Blissful Mother " This boy had to conduct the worship morning and evening, and by degrees this one idea filled his mind—"Is there anything behind this image? Is it true that there is a Mother of Bliss in the universe? Is it true that She lives

and guides this universe, or is it all a dream? Is there any reality in religion?"

This scepticism comes to the Hindu child. It is the scepticism of our country—is this that we are doing real? And theories will not satisfy us, although there are ready at hand almost all the theories that have ever been made with regard to God and soul. Neither books nor theories can satisfy us, the one idea that gets hold of thousands of our people is this idea of realisation. Is it true that there is a God? If it be true, can I see Him? Can I realise the truth? The Western mind may think all this very impracticable, but to us it is intensely practical. For this idea men will give up their lives. You have just heard how from the earliest times there have been persons who have given up all comforts and luxuries to live in caves, and hundreds have given up their homes to weep bitter tears of misery on the banks of sacred rivers, in order to realise this idea, not to know, in the ordinary sense of the word, not intellectual understanding, not a mere rationalistic comprehension of the real thing, not mere groping in the dark, but intense realisation, much more real than this world is to our senses. That is the idea. I do not advance any proposition as to that just now, but that is the one fact that is impressed upon them. Thousands will be killed, other thousands will be ready. So upon this one idea the whole nation for thousands of years have been denying and sacrificing themselves. For this idea thousands of Hindus every year give up their homes and many of them die through the hardships they have to undergo. To the Western mind this must seem most visionary, and I can see the reason for this point of view. But though I have resided in the West, I still think this idea the most practical thing in life.

Every moment I think of anything else is so much loss to me, even the marvels of earthly sciences; everything is vain if it takes me away from that thought. Life

is but momentary, whether you have the knowledge of an angel, or the ignorance of an animal Life is but momentary, whether you have the poverty of the poorest man in rags, or the wealth of the richest living person Life is but momentary, whether you are a down-trodden man living in one of the big streets of the big cities of the West, or a crowned Emperor ruling over millions Life is but momentary, whether you have the best of health or the worst Life is but momentary, whether you have the most poetical temperament or the most cruel There is but one solution of life, says the Hindu, and that solution is what they call God and religion. If these be true, life becomes explained, life becomes bearable, becomes enjoyable Otherwise, life is but a useless burden That is our idea, but no amount of reasoning can demonstrate it ; it can only make it probable, and there it rests The highest demonstration of reasoning that we have in any branch of knowledge can only make a fact probable, and nothing further The most demonstrable facts of physical science are only probabilities, not facts yet. Facts are only in the senses Facts have to be perceived and we have to perceive religion to demonstrate it to ourselves We have to sense God to be convinced that there is a God We must sense the facts of religion to know that they are facts Nothing else, and no amount of reasoning, but our own perceptions can make these things real to us, can make my belief firm as a rock That is my idea, and that is the Indian idea

This idea took possession of the boy and his whole life became concentrated upon that Day after day he would weep and say "Mother, is it true that Thou existest, or is it all poetry? Is the Blissful Mother an imagination of poets and misguided people, or is there such a Reality?" We have seen that of books, of education in our sense of the word, he had none, and so much the more natural, so much the more healthy, was his mind, so

much the purer his thoughts, undiluted by drinking in the thoughts of others. Because he did not go to the university, therefore he thought for himself. Because we have spent half our lives in the university we are filled with a collection of other people's thoughts. Well has Prof Max Muller said in the article I have just referred to that this was a clean, original man and the secret of that originality was that he was not brought up within the precincts of a university. However, this thought—whether God can be seen—which was uppermost in his mind gained in strength every day until he could think of nothing else. He could no more conduct the worship properly, could no more attend to the various details in all their minuteness. Often he would forget to place the food-offering before the image, sometimes he would forget to wave the light, at other times he would wave it for hours, and forget everything else.

And that one idea was in his mind every day—"Is it true that Thou existest, O Mother? Why dost Thou not speak? Art Thou dead?" Perhaps some of us here will remember that there are moments in our lives when, tired of all these ratiocinations of dull and dead logic, tired of plodding through books—which after all teach us nothing, become nothing but a sort of intellectual opium-eating—we must have it at stated times or we die—tired with all this, the heart of our hearts sends out a wail: "Is there no one in this universe who can show me the light? If Thou art, show the light unto me. Why dost Thou not speak? Why dost Thou make Thyself so scarce, why send so many Messengers and not Thyself come to me? In this world of fights and factions whom am I to follow and believe? If Thou art the God of every man and woman alike, why comest Thou not to speak to Thy child and see if he is not ready?" Well, to us all come such thoughts in moments of great depression; but such are the temptations surrounding us, that the next moment we

forget For the moment it seemed that the doors of the heavens were going to be opened, for the moment it seemed as if we were going to plunge into the light effulgent, but the animal man again shakes off all these angelic visions Down we go, animal man once more, eating and drinking and dying, and dying and drinking and eating again and again But there are exceptional minds which are not turned away so easily, which once attracted can never be turned back, whatever may be the temptation in the way, which want to see the Truth, knowing that life must go. They say, let it go in a noble conquest, and what conquest is nobler than the conquest of the lower man, than this solution of the problem of life and death, of good and evil?

At last it became impossible for him to serve in the temple He left it and entered into a little wood that was near and lived there About this part of his life, he told me many times that he could not tell when the sun rose or set, or how he lived He lost all thought of himself and forgot to eat During this period he was lovingly watched over by a relative who put into his mouth food which he mechanically swallowed

Days and nights thus passed with the boy. When a whole day would pass, towards the evening, when the peal of bells in the temples, and the voices singing, would reach the wood, it would make the boy very sad, and he would cry. "Another day is gone in vain, Mother, and Thou hast not come Another day of this short life has gone and I have not known the Truth." In the agony of his soul, sometimes he would rub his face against the ground and weep, and this one prayer burst forth "Do Thou manifest Thyself in me, Thou Mother of the Universe! See that I need Thee, and nothing else!" Verily, he wanted to be true to his own ideal He had heard that the Mother never came until everything had been given up for Her He had heard that the Mother wanted to come to everyone, but

they would not have Her, that people wanted all sorts of foolish little idols to pray to, that they wanted their own enjoyments, and not the Mother, and that the moment they really wanted Her with their whole soul, and nothing else, that moment She would come. So he began to break himself into that idea, he wanted to be exact, even on the plane of matter. He threw away all the little property he had, and took a vow that he would never touch money, and this one idea, "I will not touch money," became a part of him. It may appear to be something occult, but even in after-life, when he was sleeping, if I touched him with a piece of money his hand would become bent, and his whole body would become, as it were, paralysed. The other idea that came into his mind was that lust was the other enemy. Man is a soul, and soul is sexless, neither man nor woman. The idea of sex and the idea of money were the two things, he thought, that prevented him from seeing the Mother. This whole universe is the manifestation of the Mother, and She lives in every woman's body. "Every woman represents the Mother, how can I think of woman in mere sex relation?" That was the idea. Every woman was his Mother, he must bring himself to the state when he would see nothing but Mother in every woman; and he carried it out in his life.

This is the tremendous thirst that seizes the human heart. Later on, this very man said to me: "My child, suppose there is a bag of gold in one room, and a robber in the next room; do you think that robber can sleep? He cannot. His mind will be always thinking how to get into that room and obtain possession of that gold. Do you think then that a man firmly persuaded that there is a Reality behind all these appearances, that there is a God, that there is One who never dies, One who is infinite bliss, a bliss compared with which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can rest contented without struggling to attain It? Can he cease his efforts for a moment? No.

He will become mad with longing " This divine madness seized the boy At that time he had no teacher, nobody to tell him anything, and every one thought that he was out of his mind This is the ordinary condition of things. If a man throws aside the vanities of the world we hear him called mad, but such men are the salt of the earth Out of such madness have come the powers that have moved this world of ours, and out of such madness alone will come the powers of the future, that are going to move the world

So days, weeks, months passed in continuous struggle of the soul to arrive at Truth The boy began to see visions, to see wonderful things, the secrets of his nature were beginning to open to him Veil after veil was, as it were, being taken off Mother Herself became the teacher, and initiated the boy into the truths he sought At this time there came to this place a woman, of beautiful appearance, learned beyond compare Later on, this Saint used to say about her that she was not learned, but was the embodiment of learning she was learning itself, in human form There, too, you find the peculiarity of the Indian nation. In the midst of the ignorance in which the average Hindu woman lives, in the midst of what is called in Western countries her lack of freedom, there could arise a woman of supreme spirituality She was a Sannyâsini, for women also give up the world, throw away their property, do not marry, and devote themselves to the worship of the Lord She came, and when she heard of this boy in the grove she offered to go and see him, and hers was the first help he received At once she recognised what his trouble was, and she said to him "My son, blessed is the man upon whom such madness comes The whole of this universe is mad, some for wealth, some for pleasure, some for fame, some for a hundred other things They are mad for gold, or husbands, or wives, for little trifles, mad to tyrannise over somebody, mad to become



rich, mad for every foolish thing except God. And they can understand only their own madness. When another man is mad after gold they have fellow-feeling and sympathy for him, and they say he is the right man, as lunatics think that lunatics alone are sane. But if a man is mad after the Beloved, after the Lord, how can they understand? They think he has gone crazy, and they say, 'Have nothing to do with him.' That is why they call you mad, but yours is the right kind of madness. Blessed is the man who is mad after God. Such men are very few." This woman remained near the boy for years, taught him the forms of the religions of India, initiated him into the different practices of Yoga, and, as it were, guided and brought into harmony this tremendous river of spirituality.

Later, there came to the same grove a Sannyâsin, one of the begging friars of India, a learned man, a philosopher. He was a peculiar man, he was an idealist. He did not believe that this world existed in reality, and to demonstrate that, he would never go under a roof, he would always live out of doors, in storm and sunshine alike. This man began to teach the boy the philosophy of the Vedas, and he found very soon, to his astonishment, that the pupil was in some respects wiser than the master. He spent several months with the boy, after which he initiated him into the order of Sannyasins, and took his departure.

When as a temple priest his extraordinary worship made people think him deranged in his head, his relatives took him home and married him to a little girl, thinking that that would turn his thoughts and restore the balance of his mind. But he came back and as we have seen, merged deeper in his madness. Sometimes, in our country, boys are married as children and have no voice in the matter, their parents marry them. Of course such a marriage is little more than a betrothal. When they are married they still continue to live with their parents, and

the real marriage takes place when the wife grows older, when it is customary for the husband to go and bring his bride to his own home. In this case, however, the husband had entirely forgotten that he had a wife. In her far off home the girl had heard that her husband had become a religious enthusiast, and that he was even considered insane by many. She resolved to learn the truth for herself, so she set out and walked to the place where her husband was. When at last she stood in her husband's presence, he at once admitted her right to his life, although in India any person, man or woman, who embraces a religious life, is thereby freed from all other obligations. The young man fell at the feet of his wife and said "As for me, the Mother has shown me that She resides in every woman, and so I have learned to look upon every woman as Mother. That is the one idea I can have about you, but if you wish to draw me into the world, as I have been married to you, I am at your service."

The maiden was a pure and noble soul, and was able to understand her husband's aspirations and sympathise with them. She quickly told him that she had no wish to drag him down to a life of worldliness, but that all she desired was to remain near him, to serve him and to learn of him. She became one of his most devoted disciples, always revering him as a divine being. Thus through his wife's consent the last barrier was removed and he was free to lead the life he had chosen.

The next desire that seized upon the soul of this man was to know the truth about the various religions. Up to that time he had not known any religion but his own. He wanted to understand what other religions were like. So, he sought teachers of other religions. By teachers you must always remember what we mean in India, not a book-worm, but a man of realisation, one who knows truth at first-hand and not through an intermediary. He found a Mohammedan saint and went to live with him, he

underwent the disciplines prescribed by him, and to his astonishment found that when faithfully carried out, these devotional methods led him to the same goal he had already attained. He gathered similar experience from following the true religion of Jesus the Christ. He went to all the sects he could find, and whatever he took up he went into with his whole heart. He did exactly as he was told, and in every instance he arrived at the same result. Thus from actual experience, he came to know that the goal of every religion is the same, that each is trying to teach the same thing, the difference being largely in method, and still more in language. At the core, all sects and all religions have the same aim, and they were only quarrelling for their own selfish purposes, they were not anxious about the truth, but about "my name" and "your name." Two of them preached the same truth, but one of them said, "That cannot be true, because I have not put upon it the seal of my name. Therefore do not listen to him." And the other man said, "Do not hear him, although he is preaching very much the same thing, yet it is not true because he does not preach it in my name."

That is what my Master found, and he then set about to learn humility, because he had found that the one idea in all religions is, "not me, but Thou," and he who says, "not me," the Lord fills his heart. The less of this little "I" the more of God there is in him. That he found to be the truth in every religion in the world, and he set himself to accomplish this. As I have told you, whenever he wanted to do anything he never confined himself to fine theories, but would enter into the practice immediately. We see many persons talking the most wonderfully fine things about charity and about equality and the rights of other people and all that, but it is only in theory. I was so fortunate as to find one who was able to carry theory into practice. He had the most wonderful faculty of carrying everything into practice which he thought was right.

Now, there was a family of Pariahs living near the place. The Pariahs number several millions in the whole of India, and are a sect of people so low that some of our books say that if a Brahman coming out from his house sees the face of a Pariah, he has to fast that day and recite certain prayers, before he becomes holy again. In some Hindu cities when a Pariah enters, he has to put a crow's feather on his head, as a sign that he is a Pariah, and he has to cry aloud, "Save yourselves, the Pariah is passing through the street," and you will find people flying off from him as if by magic, because if they touch him by chance, they will have to change their clothes, bathe, and do other things. And the Pariah for thousands of years has believed that it is perfectly right, that his touch will make everybody unholy. Now, my Master would go to a Pariah and ask to be allowed to clean his house. The business of the Pariah is to clean the streets of the cities, and to keep houses clean. He cannot enter the house by the front door, by the back door he enters, and as soon as he has gone the whole place over which he has passed is sprinkled with and made holy by a little Ganges water. By birth the Brahman stands for holiness, and the Pariah for the very reverse. And this Brahman asked to be allowed to do the menial services in the house of the Pariah. The Pariah of course could not allow that, for they all think that if they allow a Brahman to do such menial work it will be an awful sin, and they will become extinct. The Pariah would not permit it, so in the dead of night, when all were sleeping, Ramakrishna would enter the house. He had long hair, and with his hair he would wipe the place, saying, "Oh, my Mother, make me the servant of the Pariah, make me feel that I am even lower than the Pariah." "They worship Me best, who worship My worshippers. These are all My children and your privilege is to serve them"—is the teaching of Hindu Scriptures.

There were various other preparations, which would

take a long time to relate, and I want to give you just a sketch of his life. For years he thus educated himself. One of the Sâdhanâs was to root out the sex idea. Soul has no sex, it is neither male nor female. It is only in the body that sex exists, and the man who desires to reach the Spirit cannot at the same time hold to sex distinctions. Having been born in a masculine body, this man wanted to bring the feminine idea into everything. He began to think that he was a woman, he dressed like a woman, spoke like a woman, gave up the occupations of men, and lived in the household among the women of a good family, until, after years of this discipline, his mind became changed, and he entirely forgot the idea of sex ; thus the whole view of life became changed to him.

We hear in the West about worshipping woman, but this is usually for her youth and beauty. This man meant by worshipping woman, that to him every woman's face was that of the Blissful Mother, and nothing but that. I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch, and falling at their feet bathed in tears, saying : "Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, and in another form Thou art the universe. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee." Think of the blessedness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, which can look upon every woman with that love and reverence, when every woman's face becomes transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race, shines upon it ! That is what we want. Do you mean to say that the divinity back of woman can ever be cheated ? It never was and never will be. It always asserts itself. Unfailingly it detects fraud, it detects hypocrisy, unerringly it feels the warmth of truth, the light of spirituality, the holiness of purity. Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be attained.

This rigorous, unsullied purity came into the life of that man. All the struggles which we have in our lives were past for him. His hard-earned jewels of spirituality, for which he had given three-quarters of his life, were now ready to be given to humanity, and then began his mission. His teaching and preaching were peculiar. In our country a teacher is a most highly venerated person, he is regarded as God Himself. We have not even the same respect for our father and mother. Father and mother give us our body, but the teacher shows us the way to salvation. We are his children, we are born in the spiritual line of the teacher. All Hindus come to pay respect to an extraordinary teacher, they crowd around him. And here was such a teacher, but the teacher had no thought whether he was to be respected or not, he had not the least idea that he was a great teacher, he thought that it was Mother who was doing everything and not he. He always said "If any good comes from my lips, it is the Mother who speaks, what have I to do with it?" That was his one idea about his work, and to the day of his death he never gave it up. This man sought no one. His principle was, first form character, first earn spirituality, and results will come of themselves. His favourite illustration was, "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey, so let the lotus of your character be full-blown and the results will follow." This is a great lesson to learn.

My Master taught me this lesson hundreds of times, yet I often forget it. Few understand the power of thought. If a man goes into a cave, shuts himself in, and thinks one really great thought and dies, that thought will penetrate the walls of that cave, vibrate through space, and at last permeate the whole human race. Such is the power of thought, be in no hurry therefore to give your thoughts to others. First have something to give. He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is

not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense. This idea is very old in India and finds illustration in the West in the theory, in the belief, of apostolic succession. Therefore, first make character—that is the highest duty you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can teach it afterwards, they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master. He criticised no one. For years I lived with that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of condemnation for any sect. He had the same sympathy for all sects; he had found the harmony between them. A man may be intellectual, or devotional, or mystic, or active, the various religions represent one or the other of these types. Yet it is possible to combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is going to do. That was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the good in all.

People came by thousands to see and hear this wonderful man, who spoke in a *patois*, every word of which was forceful and instinct with light. For it is not what is spoken, much less the language in which it is spoken, but it is the personality of the speaker which dwells in everything he says that carries weight. Every one of us feels this at times. We hear most splendid orations, most wonderfully reasoned-out discourses, and we go home and forget them all. At other times we hear a few words in the simplest language, and they enter into our lives, become part and parcel of ourselves and produce lasting results. The words of a man who can put his personality into them, take effect, but he must have tremendous personality. All teaching implies giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have something to give, and the other must be open to receive.

This man came to live near Calcutta, the capital of India, the most important university town in our country, which was sending out sceptics and materialists by the hundreds every year, yet many of these university men, sceptics, and agnostics, used to come and listen to him. I heard of this man, and I went to hear him. He looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He used the most simple language, and I thought, "Can this man be a great teacher?"—crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life. "Do you believe in God, Sir?" "Yes," he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir?" "Yes." "How?" "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense." That impressed me at once. For the first time I found a man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality, to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world. I began to go to that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can change a whole life. I have read about Buddha and Christ and Mahomed, about all those different luminaries of ancient times, how they would stand up and say, "Be thou whole," and the man became whole. I now found it to be true, and when I myself saw this man, all scepticism was brushed aside. It could be done, and my Master used to say "Religion can be given and taken more tangibly, more really than anything else in the world." Be therefore spiritual first; have something to give, and then stand before the world and give it. Religion is not talk, or doctrines or theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the relation between the soul and God; how can it be made into a society? It would then degenerate into business, and wherever there are business and business principles in religion, spirituality dies. Religion does not consist in erecting temples, or building churches, or attending public worship. It is not



to be found in books, or in words, or in lectures, or in organisations. Religion consists in realisation. As a fact, we all know that nothing will satisfy us until we know the truth for ourselves. However we may argue, however much we may hear, but one thing will satisfy us, and that is our own realisation, and such an experience is possible for every one of us, if we will only try. The first ideal of this attempt to realise religion is that of renunciation. As far as we can, we must give up. Darkness and light, enjoyment of the world and enjoyment of God, will never go together. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Let people try it if they will, and I have seen millions in every country who have tried; but after all, it comes to nothing. If one word remains true in the saying, it is, give up everything for the sake of the Lord. This is a hard and long task, but you can begin it here and now. Bit by bit we must go towards it.

The second idea that I learned from my Master, and which is perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of One Eternal Religion. That One Eternal Religion is applied to different planes of existence, is applied to the opinions of various minds and various races. There never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion; there never existed many religions, there is only the one. One Infinite Religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this Religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways. Therefore we must respect all religions and we must try to accept them all as far as we can. Religions manifest themselves not only according to race and geographical position, -but according to individual powers. In one man, religion is manifesting itself as intense activity, as work. In another, it is manifesting itself as intense devotion, in yet another, as mysticism, in others as philosophy, and so forth. It is

wrong when we say to others: "Your methods are not right". Perhaps a man, whose nature is that of love, thinks that the man who does good to others is not on the right road to religion, because it is not his own way, and is therefore wrong. If the philosopher thinks, "Oh, the poor ignorant people, what do they know about a God of Love, and loving Him, they do not know what they mean," he is wrong, because they may be right and he also.

To learn this central secret that the Truth may be one and yet many at the same time, that we may have different visions of the same Truth from different stand-points, is exactly what must be done. Then, instead of antagonism to any one, we shall have infinite sympathy with all. Knowing that as long as there are different natures born in this world, the same religious truth will require different adaptations, we shall understand that we are bound to have forbearance with each other. Just as nature is unity in variety—an infinite variation in the phenomenal, that in and through all these variations of the phenomenal runs the Infinite, the Unchangeable, the Absolute Unity—so it is with every man; the microcosm is but a miniature repetition of the macrocosm, in spite of all these variations, in and through them all runs this eternal harmony, and we have to recognise this. This idea, above all other ideas, I find to be the crying necessity of the day. Coming from a country which is a hotbed of religious sects—and to which, through its good fortune or ill fortune, every one who has a religious idea wants to send an advance-guard—I have been acquainted from my childhood with the various sects of the world. Even the Mormons come to preach in India. Welcome them all! That is the soil on which to preach religion. There it takes root more than in any other country. If you come and teach politics to the Hindus they do not understand, but if you come to preach religion, however curious it

may be, you will have hundreds and thousands of followers in no time, and you have every chance of becoming a living God in your lifetime. I am glad it is so, it is the one thing we want in India.

The sects among the Hindus are various, a great many in number, and some of them apparently hopelessly contradictory. Yet they all tell you they are but different manifestations of Religion. "As different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running crooked or straight, all come and mingle their waters in the ocean, so the different sects, with their different points of view, at last all come unto Thee." This is not a theory, it has to be recognised, but not in that patronising way which we see with some people, "Oh yes, there are some very good things in it. These are what we call the ethnical religions. These ethnical religions have some good in them." Some even have the most wonderfully liberal idea that other religions are all little bits of a prehistoric evolution, but "ours is the fulfilment of things." One man says because his is the oldest religion, it is the best, another makes the same claim because his is the latest. We have to recognise that each one of them has the same saving power as the other. What you have heard about their difference, whether in the temple or in the church, is a mass of superstition. The same God answers all, and it is not you, or I, or any body of men, that is responsible for the safety and salvation of the least little bit of the soul; the same Almighty God is responsible for all. I do not understand how people declare themselves to be believers in God, and at the same time think that God has handed over to a little body of men all truth, and that they are the guardians of the rest of humanity. How can you call that religion? Religion is realisation, but mere talk, mere trying to believe, mere groping in darkness, mere parroting the words of ancestors, and thinking it is religion, mere making a political something out of the

truths of religion, is not religion at all

In every sect—even among the Mohammedans whom we always regard as the most exclusive—even among them we find that wherever there was a man trying to realise religion, from his lips have come the fiery words, “Thou art the Lord of all Thou art in the heart of all, Thou art the guide of all, Thou art the Teacher of all, and Thou carest infinitely more for the land of Thy children than we can ever do.” Do not try to disturb the faith of any man If you can, give him something better, if you can, get hold of a man where he stands and give him a push upwards; do so, but do not destroy what he has The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment’s notice The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student’s soul and see through the student’s eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else All these negative, breaking-down, destructive teachers that are in the world, can never do any good

In the presence of my Master I found out that man could be perfect, even in this body Those lips never cursed any one, never even criticised any one Those eyes were beyond the possibility of seeing evil, that mind had lost the power of thinking evil He saw nothing but good That tremendous purity, that tremendous renunciation is the one secret of spirituality. “Neither through wealth, nor through progeny, but through renunciation alone, is immortality to be reached,” say the Vedas. “Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and follow Me.” says the Christ So all great Saints and Prophets have expressed it, and have carried it out in their lives How can great spirituality come without that renunciation? Renunciation is the background of all religious thought wherever it be, and you will always find that as this idea

of renunciation lessens, the more will the senses creep into the field of religion, and spirituality will decrease in the same ratio.

That man was the embodiment of renunciation. In our country it is necessary for a man who becomes a Sannyasin to give up all worldly wealth and position, and this my Master carried out literally. There were many who would have felt themselves blest if he would only have accepted a present from their hands, who would gladly have given him thousands of rupees if he would have taken them, but these were the only men from whom he would turn away. He was a triumphant example, a living realisation of the complete conquest of lust, and of desire for money. He was beyond all ideas of either, and such men are necessary for this century. Such renunciation is necessary in these days when men have begun to think that they cannot live a month without what they call their "necessities," and which they are increasing out of all proportion. It is necessary in a time like this that a man should arise to demonstrate to the sceptics of the world that there yet breathes a man who does not care a straw for all the gold or all the fame that is in the universe. Yet there are such men.

The other idea of his life was intense love for others. The first part of my Master's life was spent in acquiring spirituality, and the remaining years in distributing it. People in our country have not the same customs as you have in visiting a religious teacher, or a Sannyasin. Somebody would come to ask him about something, some perhaps would come hundreds of miles, walking all the way, just to ask one question, to hear one word from him. "Tell me one word for my salvation." That is the way they come. They come in numbers, unceremoniously, to the place where he is mostly to be found; they may find him under a tree, and question him, and before one set of people has gone, others have arrived. So, if a man is

greatly revered, he will sometimes have no rest day or night. He will have to talk constantly. For hours, people will come pouring in, and this man will be teaching them.

So men came in crowds to hear him, and he would talk twenty hours in the twenty-four, and that not for one day, but for months and months, until at last the body broke down under the pressure of this tremendous strain. His intense love for mankind would not let him refuse to help even the humblest of the thousands who sought his aid. Gradually there developed a vital throat disorder, and yet he could not be persuaded to refrain from these exertions. As soon as he heard that people were asking to see him, he would insist upon having them admitted, and would answer all their questions. When expostulated with, he replied, "I do not care. I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man." There was no rest for him. Once a man asked him: "Sir, you are a great Yogi. Why do you not put your mind a little on your body and cure your disease?" At first he did not answer, but when the question had been repeated, he gently said: "My friend, I thought you were a sage, but you talk like other men of the world. This mind has been given to the Lord. Do you mean to say that I should take it back and put it upon the body, which is but a mere cage of the soul?"

So he went on preaching to the people, and the news spread that his body was about to pass away, and the people began to flock to him in greater crowds than ever. You cannot imagine the way they come to these great religious teachers in India, how they crowd round them and make gods of them while they are yet living. Thousands wait simply to touch the hem of their garments. It is through this appreciation of spirituality in others that spirituality is produced. Whatever man wants and appreciates, he will get, and it is the same with nations. If you go to India and deliver a political lecture, however grand

it may be, you will scarcely find people to listen to you, but just go and teach religion, *live* it, not merely talk it, and hundreds will crowd just to look at you, to touch your feet. When the people heard that this holy man was likely to go from them soon, they began to come round him more than ever, and my Master went on teaching them without the least regard for his health. We could not prevent this. Many of the people came from long distances, and he would not rest until he had answered their questions. "While I can speak I must teach them," he would say, and he was as good as his word. One day, he told us that he would lay down the body that day, and repeating the most sacred word of the Vedas he entered into Samâdhi and passed away.

His thoughts and his Message were known to very few capable of giving them out. Among others, he left a few young boys who had renounced the world, and were ready to carry on his work. Attempts were made to crush them. But they stood firm, having the inspiration of that great life before them. Having had the contact of that blessed life for years, they stood their ground. These young men, living as Sannyasins, begged through the streets of the city where they were born, although some of them came from high families. At first they met with great antagonism, but they persevered and went on from day to day spreading all over India the Message of that great man, until the whole country was filled with the ideas he had preached. This man, from a remote village of Bengal, without education, by the sheer force of his own determination, realised the Truth and gave it to others, leaving only a few young boys to keep it alive.

To-day the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is known all over India by its millions of people. Nay, the power of that man has spread beyond India, and if there has ever been a word of truth, a word of spirituality,

that I have spoken anywhere in the world, I owe it to my Master, only the mistakes are mine

This is the Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world: "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches or temples, they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality, and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have felt. Only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light."

The more such men are produced in a country, the more that country will be raised, and that country where such men absolutely do not exist is simply doomed, nothing can save it. Therefore, my Master's message to mankind is, "Be spiritual and realise Truth for yourself." He would have you give up for the sake of your fellow-beings. He would have you cease talking about love for your brother, and set to work to prove your words. The time has come for renunciation, for realisation, and then you will see the harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is no need of any quarrel, and then only will you be ready to help humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions, was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great Teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realised that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the One Eternal Religion

---



## INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

*(Delivered under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, in the Art Gallery of the Pouch Mansion, Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, U S. A )*

India, although only half the size of the United States, contains a population of over two hundred and ninety millions, and there are three religions which hold sway over them, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist<sup>1</sup> and the Hindu. The adherents of the first mentioned number about sixty millions, of the second, about nine millions, while the last embrace nearly two hundred and six millions. The cardinal features of the Hindu religion are founded on the meditative and speculative philosophy and on the ethical teachings contained in the various books of the Vedas, which assert that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in duration. It never had a beginning, and it never will have an end. Innumerable have been the manifestations of the power of the Spirit in the realm of matter, of the force of the Infinite in the domain of the finite, but the Infinite Spirit Itself is self-existent, eternal and unchangeable. The passage of time makes no mark whatever on the dial of eternity. In its supersensuous region which cannot be comprehended at all by the human understanding, there is no past, and there is no future. The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal. The body is subject to the law of growth and decay ; what grows, must of necessity decay. But the indwelling Spirit is related to the infinite and eternal life ; it never had a beginning and it never will have an end. One of the chief distinctions between the Hindu and the Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning, at its birth into

<sup>1</sup> Including the Jain

this world, whereas the Hindu religion asserts that the Spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being, and had no more a beginning than God Himself. Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection, when there is no more change.

It has been often asked, if this be so, why is it we do not remember anything of our past lives? This is our explanation: Consciousness is the name of the surface only of the mental ocean, but within its depths are stored up all our experiences, both pleasant and painful. The desire of the human soul is to find out something that is stable. The mind and the body, in fact all the various phenomena of nature, are in a condition of incessant change. But the highest aspiration of our spirit is to find out something that does not change, that has reached a state of permanent perfection. And this is the aspiration of the human soul after the Infinite! The finer our moral and intellectual development, the stronger will become this aspiration after the Eternal that changes not.

The modern Buddhists teach that everything that cannot be known by the five senses is non-existent, and that it is a delusion to suppose that man is an independent entity. The idealists, on the contrary, claim that each individual is an independent entity, and the external world does not exist outside of his mental conception. But the sure solution of this problem is that nature is a mixture of independence and dependence, of reality and idealism. Our mind and bodies are dependent on the external world, and this dependence varies according to the nature of their relation to it, but the indwelling Spirit is free, as God is free, and is able to direct in a greater or lesser degree, according to the state of their development, the movements of our minds and bodies.

Death is but a change of condition. We remain in

the same universe, and are subject to the same laws as before. Those who have passed beyond, and have attained high planes of development in beauty and wisdom, are but the advance-guard of a universal army, who are following after them. The spirit of the highest is related to the spirit of the lowest, and the germ of infinite perfection exists in all. We should cultivate the optimistic temperament, and endeavour to see the good that dwells in everything. If we sit down and lament over the imperfection of our bodies and minds, we profit nothing ; it is the heroic endeavour to subdue adverse circumstances that carries our spirits upwards. The object of life is to learn the laws of spiritual progress. Christians can learn from Hindus, and Hindus can learn from Christians. Each has made a contribution of value to the wisdom of the world.

Impress upon your children that true religion is positive, and not regative. That it does not consist in merely refraining from evil, but in a persistent performance of noble deeds. True religion comes not from the teaching of men or the reading of books, it is the awakening of the Spirit within us, consequent upon pure and heroic action. Every child born into the world brings with it a certain accumulated experience, from previous incarnations and the impress of this experience is seen in the structure of its mind and body. But the feeling of independence which possesses us all, shows there is something in us besides mind and body. The soul that reigns within is independent, and creates the desire for freedom. If we are not free, how can we hope to make the world better? We hold that human progress is the result of the action of the human Spirit. What the world is, and what we ourselves are, are the fruits of the freedom of the Spirit.

We believe in one God, the Father of us all, who is omnipresent, and omnipotent, and who guides and

preserves His children with infinite love We believe in a Personal God as the Christians do, but we go further we believe that we are He! That His personality is manifested in us, that God is in us, and that we are in God We believe there is a germ of truth in all religions, and the Hindu bows down to them all, for, in this world, truth is to be found not in subtraction but in addition We would offer God a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers of all the diverse faiths. We must love God for love's sake, not for the hope of reward We must do our duty for duty's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must worship the beautiful for beauty's sake, not for the hope of reward Thus in the purity of our hearts shall we see God. Sacrifices, genuflexions, mumblings and mutterings are not religion. They are only good if they stimulate us to the brave performance of beautiful and heroic deeds, and lift our thoughts to the apprehension of the divine perfection

What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as our brother? Books are only made so that they may point the way to a higher life, but no good results unless the path is trodden with unflinching steps! Every human personality may be compared to a glass globe There is the same pure white light—an emission of the divine Being—in the centre of each, but the glass being of different colours and thickness, the rays assume diverse aspects in the transmission The equality and beauty of each central flame is the same, and the apparent inequality is only in the imperfection of the temporal instrument of its expression As we rise higher and higher in the scale of being, the medium becomes more and more translucent

---

## THE BASIS FOR PSYCHIC OR SPIRITUAL RESEARCH

It was not often that Swami Vivekananda, while in the West, took part in debates. One such occasion, in London, when he did so, was during the discussion of a lecture on, "Can Psychic Phenomena be proved from a Scientific Basis?" Referring first to a remark which he had heard in the course of this debate, not for the first time in the West, he said:

One point I wanted to remark upon. It is a mistaken statement that has been made to us that the Mohammedans do not believe that women have souls. I am very sorry to say it is an old mistake among Christian people, and they seem to like the mistake. That is a peculiarity in human nature, that people want to say something very bad about others whom they do not like. By the by, you know I am not a Mohammedan, but yet I have had opportunities for studying this religion, and there is not one word in the Koran which says that women have no souls, but in fact it says they have.

About the psychical things that have been the subject of discussion, I have very little to say here, for in the first place, the question is whether psychical subjects are capable of scientific demonstration. What do you mean by this demonstration? First of all, there will be the subjective and the objective side necessary. Taking chemistry and physics, with which we are so familiar, and of which we have read so much, is it true that everyone in this world is able to understand the demonstration even of the commonest subjects? Take any boor and show him one of your experiments, what will he understand of it? Nothing. It requires a good deal of previous training to be

brought up to the point of understanding an experiment. Before that he cannot understand it at all. That is a great difficulty in the way. If scientific demonstration means bringing down certain facts to a plane which is universal for all human beings, where all beings can understand it, I deny that there can be any such scientific demonstration for any subject in the world. If it were so, all our universities and education would be in vain. Why are we educated, if by birth we can understand everything scientific? Why so much study? It is of no use whatsoever. So, on the face of it, it is absurd if this be the meaning of scientific demonstration, the bringing down of intricate facts to the plane on which we are now. The next meaning should be the correct one, perhaps—that certain facts should be adduced as proving certain more intricate facts. There are certain more complicated, intricate phenomena, which we explain by less intricate ones, and thus get, perhaps, nearer to them; in this way they are gradually brought down to the plane of our present ordinary consciousness. But even this is very complicated, and very difficult, and means a training also, a tremendous amount of education. So all I have to say is that in order to have scientific explanation of psychical phenomena, we require not only perfect evidence on the side of the phenomena themselves, but a good deal of training on the part of those who want to see. All this being granted, we shall be in a position to say yea or nay, about the proof or disproof of any phenomena which are presented before us. But, before that, the most remarkable phenomena, or the most oft-recorded phenomena that have happened in human society, in my opinion, would be very hard indeed to prove even in an off-hand manner.

Next, as to those hasty explanations, that religion are the outcome of dreams—those who have made a proper study of them would think of them but as mere guesses.

We have no reason to suppose that religions were the outcome of dreams, as has been so easily explained. Then it would be very easy indeed to take even the agnostic's position, but unfortunately the matter cannot be explained so easily. There are many other wonderful phenomena happening, even at the present time, and these have all to be investigated, and not only have to be, but have been investigated all along. The blind man says there is no sun. That does not prove that there is no sun. These phenomena have been investigated years before. Whole races of mankind have trained themselves for centuries to become fit instruments for discovering the fine workings of the nerves; their records have been published ages ago, colleges have been created to study these subjects, and men and women there are still who are living demonstrations of these phenomena. Of course I admit that there is a good deal of hoax in the whole thing, a good deal of what is wrong and untrue in these things, but with what is this not the case? Take any common scientific phenomenon, there are two or three facts which either scientists or ordinary men may regard as absolute truths, and the rest as mere frothy suppositions. Now let the agnostic apply the same test to his own science which he would apply to what he does not want to believe! Half of it would be shaken to its foundation at once. We are bound to live on suppositions. We cannot live satisfied where we are, that is the natural growth of the human soul. We cannot become agnostics on this side and at the same time go about seeking for anything here; we have to peek. And, for this reason, we have to get beyond our limits, struggle to know what seems to be unknowable, and this struggle must continue.

In my opinion, therefore, I go really one step further than the lecturer, and advance the opinion that most of the psychical phenomena—not only little things, like spirit-rappings, or table-rappings, which are mere child's play,

not merely little things like telepathy, which I have seen boys do even—most of the psychical phenomena which the last speaker calls the higher clairvoyance, but which I would rather beg to call the experiences of the super-conscious state of the mind, are the very stepping-stones to real psychological investigation. The first thing to be seen is whether the mind can attain to that state or not. My explanation would, of course, be a little different from his, but we should probably agree when we explain terms. Not much depends on the question whether this present consciousness continues after death or not, seeing that this universe, as it is now, is not bound to this state of consciousness. Consciousness is not co-existent with existence. In my own body, and in all of our bodies, we must all admit that we are conscious of very little of the body, and of the greater part of it we are unconscious. Yet it exists. Nobody is ever conscious of his brain, for example. I never saw my brain, and I am never conscious of it. Yet I know that it exists. Therefore we may say that it is not consciousness that we want, but the existence of something which is not this gross matter, and that that knowledge can be gained even in this life, and that that knowledge has been gained and demonstrated, as far as any science has been demonstrated, is a fact. We have to look into these things, and I would insist on reminding those who are here present on one other point. It is well to remember that very many times we are deluded on this. Certain people place before us the demonstration of a fact which is not ordinary to the spiritual nature, and we reject that fact because we say we cannot find it to be true. In many cases the fact may not be correct, but in many cases, also, we forget to consider whether we are fit to receive the demonstration or not, whether we have permitted our bodies and our minds to become fit subjects for their discovery.

---



## ON ART IN INDIA

“Arts and Sciences in India” was the topic under which the Swami Vivekananda was introduced to the audience at Wendte Hall, San Francisco. The Swami held the attention of his hearers throughout as was demonstrated by the many questions which were put to him after his address.

The Swami said in part :

In the history of nations, the government, at the beginning, has always been in the hands of the priests. All the learning also has proceeded from the priests. Then, after the priests, the government changes hands, and the Kshatriya, or the kingly, power prevails, and the military rule is triumphant. This has always been true. And last comes the grasp of luxury, and the people sink down under it to be dominated by stronger and more barbarous races.

Amongst all races of the world, from the earliest time in history, India has been called the land of wisdom. For ages India itself has never gone out to conquer other nations. Its people have never been fighters. Unlike your Western people, they do not eat meat, for meat makes fighters, the blood of animals makes you restless and you desire to do something.

Compare India and England in the Elizabethan period. What a dark age it was for your people and how enlightened we were even then. The Anglo-Saxon people have always been badly fitted for art. They have good poetry—for instance, how wonderful is the blank verse of Shakespeare. Merely the rhyming of words is not good. It is not the most civilised thing in the world.

In India, music was developed to the full seven notes, even to half and quarter notes, ages ago. India led in

music, also in drama and sculpture. Whatever is done now is merely an attempt at imitation. Everything now in India hinges on the question of how little a man requires to live upon.

---

## IS INDIA A BENIGHTED COUNTRY ?

The following is a report of a lecture at Detroit, United States, America, with the editorial comments of the *Boston Evening Transcript*, 5th April, 1894 :

Swami Vivekananda has been in Detroit recently and made a profound impression there. All classes flocked to hear him, and professional men in particular were greatly interested in his logic and his soundness of thought. The opera-house alone was large enough for his audience. He speaks English extremely well, and he is as handsome as he is good. The Detroit newspapers have devoted much space to the reports of his lectures. An editorial in the *Detroit Evening News* says,—Most people will be inclined to think that Swami Vivekananda did better last night in his opera-house lecture than he did in any of his former lectures in this city. The merit of the Hindu's utterances last night lay in their clearness. He drew a very sharp line of distinction between Christianity and Christianity, and told his audience plainly wherein he himself is a Christian in one sense and not a Christian in another sense. He also drew a sharp line between Hinduism and Hinduism, carrying the implication that he desired to be classed as a Hindu only in its better sense. Swami Vivekananda stands superior to all criticism when he says,—“We want missionaries of Christ. Let such come to India by the hundreds and thousands. Bring Christ's life to us and let it permeate the very core of society. Let Him be preached in every village and corner of India.”

When a man is as sound as that on the main question, all else that he may say must refer to the subordinate details. There is infinite humiliation in this spectacle of a pagan priest reading lessons of conduct and of life to the

men who have assumed the spiritual supervision of Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand ; but the sense of humiliation is the *sine qua non* of most reforms in this world. Having said what he did of the glorious life of the author of the Christian faith, Vivekananda has the right to lecture the way he has the men who profess to represent that life among the nations abroad. And after all, how like the Nazarene that sounds,—“Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves ; for the workman is worthy of his meat ” Those who have become at all familiar with the religious literature of India before the advent of Vivekananda, are best prepared to understand the utter abhorrence of the Orientals of our Western commercial spirit—or what Vivekananda calls, ‘the shopkeeper’s spirit’—in all that we do even in our very religion

Here is a point for the missionaries which they cannot afford to ignore They who would convert the Eastern world of paganism, must live up to what they preach, in contempt for the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of them

Brother Vivekananda considers India the most moral nation in the world Though in bondage, its spirituality still endures Here are extracts from the notices of some of his recent Detroit addresses —At this point the lecturer struck the great moral keynote of his discourse stating that with his people it was the belief that all non-self is good and all self is bad This point was emphasised throughout the evening and might be termed the text of the address “To build a home is selfish, argues the Hindu, so he builds it for the worship of God and for the entertainment of guests To cook food is selfish, so he cooks it for the poor , he will serve himself last if any hungry stranger applies, and this feeling extends throughout the length and breadth of the land Any man

can ask for food and shelter and any house will be opened to him."

"The caste system has nothing to do with religion. A man's occupation is hereditary—a carpenter is born a carpenter, a goldsmith, a goldsmith; a workman, a workman; and a priest, a priest."

"Two gifts are especially appreciated, the gift of learning and the gift of life. But the gift of learning takes precedence. One may save a man's life, and that is excellent, one may impart to another knowledge, and that is better. To instruct for money is an evil, and to do this would bring opprobrium upon the head of the man who barter learning for gold as though it were an article of trade. The Government makes gifts from time to time to the instructors, and the moral effect is better than it would be if the conditions were the same as exist in certain alleged civilised countries." The speaker had asked throughout the length and breadth of the land what was the definition of "civilisation," and he had asked the question in many countries. Sometimes the reply has been, "What we are, that is civilisation." He begged to differ in the definition of the word. A nation may conquer the waves, control the elements, develop the utilitarian problems of life seemingly to the utmost limits, and yet not realise that in the individual, the highest type of civilisation is found in him who has learned to conquer self. This condition is found more in India than in any other country on earth, for there the material conditions are subservient to the spiritual, and the individual looks to the soul manifestations in everything that has life, studying Nature to this end. Hence, that gentle disposition to endure with indomitable patience the flings of what appears unkind fortune, the while there is a full consciousness of a spiritual strength and knowledge greater than that possessed by any other people. Therefore the existence of a country and people from which flows an

unending stream, that attracts the attention of thinkers far and near to approach and throw from their shoulders an oppressive earthly burden.

This lecture was prefaced with the statement that the speaker had been asked many questions. A number of these he preferred to answer privately, but three he had selected, for reasons which would appear, to answer from the pulpit. They were—"Do the people of India throw their children into the jaws of the crocodiles?" "Do they kill themselves beneath the wheels of Jagannâth?" "Do they burn widows with their husbands?" The first question the lecturer treated in the same vein as an American abroad would, in answering enquiries about Indians running round in the streets of New York, and similar myths which are even to-day entertained by many persons on the Continent. The statement was too ludicrous to give a serious response to it. When asked by certain well-meaning but ignorant people why they gave only female children to the crocodiles, he could only ironically reply that probably it was because they were softer and more tender and could be more easily masticated by the inhabitants of the river in that benighted country. Regarding the Jagannath legend, the lecturer explained the old practice of the Car-festival in the sacred city, and remarked that possibly a few pilgrims in their zeal to grasp the rope and participate in the drawing of the Car, slipped and fell and were so destroyed. Some such mishaps had been exaggerated into the distorted versions from which the good people of other countries shrank with horror. Vivekananda denied that people burned widows. It was true, however, that widows had burned themselves. In the few cases where this had happened, they had been urged not to do so by holy men, who were always opposed to suicide. Where the devoted widows insisted, stating that they desired to accompany their husbands in the transformation that had taken place,

they were obliged to submit themselves to the fiery test. That is, they thrust their hands within the flames, and if they permitted them to be consumed, no further opposition was placed in the way of the fulfilment of their desires. But India is not the only country where women who have loved, have followed immediately the loved one to the realms of immortality ; suicides in such cases have occurred in every land. It is an uncommon bit of fanaticism in any country ; as unusual in India as elsewhere. "No," the speaker repeated, "the people do not burn women in India, nor have they ever burned witches."

This latter touch is decidedly acute by way of reflection. No analysis of the philosophy of the Hindu Monk need be attempted here, except to say that it is based in general on the struggle of the soul to individually attain Infinity. One learned Hindu opened the Lowell Institute Course this year. What Mr. Mozoomdar began, might worthily be ended by Brother Vivekananda. This new visitor has by far the most interesting personality, although in the Hindu philosophy, of course, personality is not to be taken into consideration. At the Parliament of Religions, they used to keep Vivekananda until the end of the programme, to make people stay until the end of the session. On a warm day, when a prosy speaker talked too long and people began going home by hundreds, the Chairman would get up and announce that Swami Vivekananda would make a short address just before the benediction. Then he would have the peaceable hundreds perfectly in tether. The four thousand fanning people in the Hall of Columbus would sit smiling and expectant, waiting for an hour or two of other men's speeches, to listen to Vivekananda for fifteen minutes. The Chairman knew the old rule of keeping the best until the last

---

WRITINGS—PROSE AND  
POEMS





## IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL ?<sup>1</sup>

*None has power to destroy the unchangeable*

—Bhagavad-Gita.

In the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahâbhârata, the story is told how the hero, Yudhishtira, when asked by Dharma to tell what was the most wonderful thing in the world, replied, that it was the persistent belief of mankind in their own deathlessness in spite of their witnessing death everywhere around them almost every moment of their lives. And, in fact, this is the most stupendous wonder in human life. In spite of all arguments to the contrary urged in different times by different schools, in spite of the inability of reason to penetrate the veil of mystery which will ever hang between the sensuous and the super-sensuous worlds, man is thoroughly persuaded that he cannot die.

We may study all our lives, and in the end fail to bring the problem of life and death to the plane of rational demonstration, affirmative or negative. We may talk or write, preach or teach, for or against the permanency or impermanency of human existence as much as we like, we may become violent partisans of this side or that, we may invent names by the hundred, each more intricate than its predecessor, and lull ourselves into a momentary rest under the delusion of our having solved the problem once for all, we may cling with all our powers to any one of the curious religious superstitions, or the far more objectionable scientific superstitions—but in the end, we find ourselves playing an eternal game in the bowling alley.

<sup>1</sup> The Swami's contribution to the discussion of this question, carried on in the pages of *The New York Morning Advertiser*

of reason and raising intellectual pin after pin, only to be knocked over again and again

But behind all this mental strain and torture, not infrequently productive of more dangerous results than mere games, stands a fact unchallenged and unchallengeable—the fact, the wonder, which the Mahabharata points out as the inability of our mind to conceive our own annihilation. Even to imagine my own annihilation I shall have to stand by and look on as a witness.

Now, before trying to understand what this curious phenomenon means, we want to note that upon this one fact the whole world stands. The permanence of the external world is inevitably joined to the permanence of the internal, and, however plausible any theory of the universe may seem which asserts the permanence of the one and denies that of the other, the theorist himself will find that in his own mechanism not one conscious action is possible, without the permanence of both the internal and the external worlds being one of the factors in the motive cause. Although it is perfectly true that when the human mind transcends its own limitations, it finds the duality reduced to an indivisible unity: on this side of the unconditioned, the whole objective world—that is to say, the world we know—is and can be alone known to us as existing for the subject, and therefore, before we would be able to conceive the annihilation of the subject we are bound to conceive the annihilation of the object.

So far it is plain enough. But now comes the difficulty. I cannot think of myself ordinarily as anything else but a body. My idea of my own permanence includes my idea of myself as a body. But the body is obviously impermanent, as is the whole of nature—a constantly vanishing quantity.

Where, then, is this permanence?

There is one more wonderful phenomenon connected with our lives, without which “who will be able to live,

who will be able to enjoy life a moment"—the idea of freedom.

This is the idea that guides each footstep of ours, makes our movements possible, determines our relations to each other—nay, is the very warp and woof in the fabric of human life. Intellectual knowledge tries to drive it inch by inch from its territory, post after post is snatched away from its domains, and each step is made fast and iron-bound with the railroadings of cause and effect. But it laughs at all our attempts, and, lo, it keeps itself above all this massive pile of law and causation with which we tried to smother it to death! How can it be otherwise? The limited always requires a higher generalisation of the unlimited to explain itself. The bound can only be explained by the free, the caused by the uncaused. But again, the same difficulty is also here. What is free? The body, or even the mind? It is apparent to all that they are as much bound by law as anything else in the universe.

Now the problem resolves itself into this dilemma: either the whole universe is a mass of never-ceasing change and nothing more, irrevocably bound by the law of causation, not one particle having a unity of itself, yet is curiously producing an ineradicable delusion of permanence and freedom, or, there is in us and in the universe something which is permanent and free, showing that the basal constitutional belief of the human mind is not a delusion. It is the duty of science to explain facts by bringing them to a higher generalisation. Any explanation, therefore, that first wants to destroy a part of the fact given to be explained, in order to fit itself to the remainder, is not scientific, whatever else it may be.

So, any explanation that wants to overlook the fact of this persistent and all-necessary idea of freedom, commits the above mentioned mistake of denying a portion of the fact, in order to explain the rest, and is, therefore, wrong. The only other alternative possible, then, is to acknowl-

edge, in harmony with our nature, that there is something in us which is free and permanent.

But it is not the body , neither is it the mind. The body is dying every minute The mind is constantly changing. The body is a combination, and so is the mind , and as such can never reach to a state beyond all change. But beyond this momentary sheathing of gross matter, beyond even the finer covering of the mind is the Atman, the true Self of man, the Permanent, the Ever-Free. It is His freedom that is percolating through layers of thought and matter, and in spite of the colourings of name and form, is ever asserting its unshackled existence. It is His deathlessness, His bliss, His peace, His divinity, that shines out and makes itself felt in spite of the thickest layers of ignorance He is the real Man, the fearless One, the deathless One, the Free

Now, freedom is only possible when no external power can exert any influence, produce any change. Freedom is only possible to the being who is beyond all conditions, all laws, all bondages of cause and effect In other words, the unchangeable alone can be free and, therefore, immortal This Being, this Atman, this real Self of man, the Free, the Unchangeable, is beyond all conditions, and as such, It has neither birth nor death

“Without birth or death, eternal, ever-existing is this Soul of man ”

---

## REINCARNATION<sup>1</sup>

*“Both you and I have passed through many births ;  
You know them not, I know them all ”*

—Bhagavad-Gita.

Of the many riddles that have perplexed the intellect of man in all climes and times, the most intricate is himself Of the myriad mysteries that have called forth his energies to struggle for solution, from the very dawn of history, the most mysterious is his own nature It is at once the most insoluble enigma and the problem of all problems As the starting-point and the repository of all we know and feel and do, there never has been, nor will be, a time when man's own nature will cease to demand his best and foremost attention

Though through hunger after that truth, which of all others has the most intimate connection with his very existence, though through an all-absorbing desire for an inward standard by which to measure the outward universe, though through the absolute and inherent necessity of finding a fixed point in a universe of change, man has sometimes clutched at handfuls of dust for gold, and even when urged on by a voice higher than reason or intellect, he has many times failed rightly to interpret the real meaning of the divinity within—still, there never was a time since the search began, when some race, or some individuals, did not hold aloft the lamp of Truth

Taking a one-sided, cursory and prejudiced view of the surroundings and the unessential details, sometimes disgusted also with the vagueness of many schools and

<sup>1</sup> Contributed to the *Metaphysical Magazine*, New York, March, 1895.

sects, and often, alas, driven to the opposite extreme by the violent superstitions of organised priestcraft—men have not been wanting, especially among advanced intellects, in either ancient or modern times, who not only gave up the search in despair, but declared it fruitless and useless. Philosophers might fret and sneer, and priests ply their trade even at the point of the sword. But truth comes to those alone who worship at her shrine for her sake only, without fear and without shopkeeping.

Light comes to individuals through the conscious efforts of their intellect, it comes slowly, though, to the whole race, through unconscious percolations. The philosophers show the volitional struggles of great minds; history reveals the silent process of permeation through which truth is absorbed by the masses.

Of all the theories that have been held by man about himself, that of a soul entity, separate from the body and immortal, has been the most wide-spread; and among those that held the belief in such a soul, the majority of the thoughtful had always believed also in its pre-existence.

At present, the greater portion of the human race, having organised religion, believe in it; and many of the best thinkers in the most favoured lands, though nurtured in religions avowedly hostile to every idea of the pre-existence of the soul, have endorsed it. Hinduism and Buddhism have it for their foundation, the educated classes among the ancient Egyptians believed in it; the ancient Persians arrived at it, the Greek philosophers made it the corner-stone of their philosophy; the Pharisees among the Hebrews accepted it, and the Sufis among the Mohammedans almost universally acknowledged its truth.

There must be peculiar surroundings which generate and foster certain forms of belief among nations. It required ages for the ancient races to arrive at any idea about a part, even of the body, surviving after death, it took ages more to come to any rational idea about this

something which persists and lives apart from the body. It was only when the idea was reached of an entity whose connection with the body was only for a time, and only among those nations who arrived at such a conclusion, that the unavoidable question arose—Whither? Whence?

The ancient Hebrews never disturbed their equanimity by questioning themselves about the soul. With them death ended all. Karl Heckel justly says: "Though it is true that in the Old Testament, preceding the exile, the Hebrews distinguish a life-principle, different from the body, which is sometimes called 'Nephesh,' or 'Ruakh,' or 'Neshama,' yet all these words correspond rather to the idea of breath, than to that of spirit or soul. Also in the writings of the Palestinean Jews, after the exile, there is never made mention of an individual immortal soul, but always only of a life-breath emanating from God, which, after the body is dissolved, is reabsorbed into the Divine 'Ruakh'."

The ancient Egyptians and the Chaldeans had peculiar beliefs of their own about the soul, but their ideas about this living part after death must not be confused with those of the ancient Hindu, the Persian, the Greek, or any other Aryan race. There was, from the earliest times, a broad distinction between the Aryas and the non-Sanskrit speaking Mlechchhas, in the conception of the soul. Externally it was typified by their disposal of the dead—the Mlechchhas mostly trying their best to *preserve* the dead bodies, either by careful burial or by the more elaborate processes of mummifying, and the Aryas generally burning their dead.

Herein lies the key to a great secret—the fact that no Mlechchha race, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian, ever attained to the idea of the soul as a separate entity which can live *independent* of the body, without the help of the Aryas, especially of the Hindus.

Although Herodotus states that the Egyptians were



the first to conceive the idea of the immortality of the soul, and states as a doctrine of the Egyptians, "That the soul after the dissolution of the body enters again and again into a creature that comes to life, then, that the soul wanders through all the animals of the land and the sea and through all the birds, and finally after three thousand years returns to a human body," yet, modern researches into Egyptology have hitherto found no trace of metempsychosis in the popular Egyptian religion. On the other hand, the most recent researches of Maspero, A. Erman, and other eminent Egyptologists, tend to confirm the supposition that the doctrine of palingenesis was not at home with the Egyptians

With the ancient Egyptians the soul was only a double, having no individuality of its own, and never able to break its connection with the body. It persists only so long as the body lasts, and if by chance the corpse is destroyed, the departed soul must suffer a second death and annihilation. The soul after death was allowed to roam freely all over the world, but always returning to where the corpse was, at night, always miserable, always hungry and thirsty, always extremely desirous to enjoy life once more, and never being able to fulfil the desire. If any part of its old body was injured, the soul was also invariably injured in its corresponding part, and this idea explains the solicitude of the ancient Egyptians to preserve their dead. At first the deserts were chosen as the burial-place, because the dryness of the air did not allow the body to perish soon, thus granting to the departed soul a long lease of existence.

In course of time one of the gods discovered the process of making mummies, through which the devout hoped to preserve the dead bodies of their ancestors for almost an infinite length of time, thus securing immortality to the departed ghost, however miserable it might be.

The perpetual-regret for the world, in which the soul can take no further interest, never ceased to torture the

deceased "Oh, my brother," exclaims the departed, "withhold not thyself from drinking and eating, from drunkenness, from love, from all enjoyment, from following thy desire by night and by day, put not sorrow within thy heart, for, what are the years of man upon earth? The West is a land of sleep and of heavy shadows, a place wherein the inhabitants, when once installed, slumber on in their mummy forms, never more waking to see their brethren, never more to recognise their fathers and mothers, with hearts forgetful of their wives and children. The living water, which earth giveth to all who dwell upon it, is for me stagnant and dead, that water floweth to all who are on earth, while for me it is but liquid putrefaction, this water that is mine. Since I came into this funeral valley I know not where nor what I am. Give me to drink of running water . . . let me be placed by the edge of the water with my face to the North, that the breeze may caress me and my heart be refreshed from its sorrow."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Chaldees also, although they did not speculate so much as the Egyptians as to the condition of the soul after death, the soul is still a double and is bound to its sepulchre. They also could not conceive of a state without this physical body, and expected a resurrection of the corpse again to life, and though the goddess Ishtar, after great perils and adventures, procured the resurrection of her shepherd husband, Dumuzi, the son of Ea and Damkina, "The most pious votaries pleaded in vain from temple to temple, for the resurrection of their dead friends."

Thus we find, that the ancient Egyptians or Chaldeans never could entirely dissociate the idea of the soul from the corpse of the departed, or the sepulchre. The state of earthly existence was best after all, and the departed

<sup>1</sup> This text has been translated into German by Brugsch, *Die Egyptische Graberwelt*, pp. 39, 40, and into French by Maspero, *Etudes Egyptiennes*, vol. I, pp. 181-190.

are always longing to have a chance once more to renew it, and the living are fervently hoping to help them in prolonging the existence of the miserable double, and striving the best they can to help them.

This is not the soil out of which any higher knowledge of the soul could spring. In the first place it is grossly materialistic, and even then it is one of terror and agony. Frightened by the almost innumerable powers of evil, and with hopeless, agonised efforts to avoid them, the souls of the living, like their ideas of the souls of the departed—wander all over the world though they might—could never get beyond the sepulchre and the crumbling corpse.

We must turn now for the source of the higher ideas of the soul to another race—whose God was an all-merciful, all-pervading Being manifesting Himself through various bright, benign, and helpful Devas, the first of all the human race who addressed their God as Father—“Oh, take me by the hands even as a father takes his dear son”, with whom life was a hope and not a despair; whose religion was not the intermittent groans escaping from the lips of an agonised man during the intervals of a life of mad excitement, but whose ideas come to us redolent with the aroma of the field and forest, whose songs of praise—spontaneous, free, joyful, like the songs which burst forth from the throats of the birds when they hail this beautiful world illuminated by the first rays of the lord of the day—come down to us even now through the vista of eighty centuries, as fresh calls from heaven: we turn to the ancient Aryas

“Place me in that deathless, undecaying world, where is the light of heaven, and everlasting lustre shines”,  
 “Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the King Vivasvân's son, where is the secret shrine of heaven”,  
 “Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as they list”; “In the third sphere of inmost heaven, where worlds are full of light, make me immortal in that

realm of bliss.”—These are the prayers of the Aryas in their oldest record, the Rîg-Veda Samhitâ.

We find at once a whole world of difference between the Mlechchha and the Arya ideals. To the one, this body and this world are all that are real, and all that are desirable. A little life-fluid which flies off from the body at death, to feel torture and agony at the loss of the enjoyments of the senses can, they fondly hope, be brought back if the body is carefully preserved, and thus a corpse became more an object of care than the living man. The other found out that that which left the body was the real man, and when separated from the body it enjoyed a state of bliss higher than it ever enjoyed when in the body. And they hastened to annihilate the corrupted corpse by burning it.

Here we find the germ out of which a true idea of the soul could come. Here it was—where the real man was not the body, but the soul, where all ideas of an inseparable connection between the real man and the body were utterly absent—that a noble idea of the freedom of the soul could rise. And it was when the Aryas penetrated even beyond the shining cloth of the body with which the departed soul was enveloped, and found its real nature of a formless, individual, unit principle, that the question inevitably arose—Whence?

It was in India and among the Aryas that the doctrine of the pre-existence, the immortality, and the individuality of the soul first arose. Recent researches in Egypt have failed to show any trace of the doctrines of an independent and individual soul existing before and after the earthly phase of existence. Some of the Mysteries were no doubt in possession of this idea, but in those it has been traced to India.

“I am convinced,” says Karl Heckel, “that the deeper we enter into the study of the Egyptian religion, the clearer it is shown that the doctrine of metemp-

sycho-sis was entirely foreign to the popular Egyptian religion ; and that even that which single mysteries possessed of it was not inherent to the Osiris teachings, but derived from Hindu sources ”

Later on, we find the Alexandrian Jews imbued with the doctrine of an individual soul, and the Pharisees of the time of Jesus, as already stated, not only had faith in an individual soul, but believed in its wanderings through various bodies ; and thus it is easy to find how Christ was recognised as the incarnation of an older Prophet, and Jesus himself directly asserted that John the Baptist was the Prophet Elias come back again “If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.”—Matt. xi. 14

The idea of a soul and of its individuality among the Hebrews, evidently came through the higher mystical teachings of the Egyptians, who in their turn derived it from India. And that it should come through Alexandria is significant, as the Buddhistic records clearly show Buddhistic missionary activity in Alexandria and Asia Minor

Pythagoras is said to have been the first Greek who taught the doctrine of palingenesis among the Hellenes. As an Aryan race, already burning their dead and believing in the doctrine of an individual soul, it was easy for the Greeks to accept the doctrine of reincarnation, through the Pythagorean teachings. According to Apuleius, Pythagoras had come to India, where he had been instructed by the Brâhmans

So far we have learned that wherever the soul was held to be an individual, the real man, and not a vivifying part of the body only, the doctrine of its pre-existence had inevitably come, and that externally those nations that believed in the independent individuality of the soul had almost always signified it by burning the bodies of the departed, though one of the ancient Aryan races, the Persian, developed, at an early period, and without any

Semitic influence, a peculiar method of disposing of the bodies of the dead. The very name by which they call their "Towers of silence," comes from the root *Daha*, to burn.

In short, the races who did not pay much attention to the analysis of their own nature, never went beyond the material body as their all in all, and even when driven by higher light to penetrate beyond, they only came to the conclusion that somehow or other, at some distant period of time, this body will become incorruptible.

On the other hand, that race which spent the best part of its energies in the inquiry into the nature of man as a thinking being—the Indo-Aryan—soon found out that beyond this body, beyond even the shining body which their forefathers longed after, is the real man, the principle, the individual who clothes himself with this body, and then throws it off when worn out. Was such a principle created? If creation means something coming out of nothing, their answer is a decisive "No." This soul is without birth and without death, it is not a compound or combination but an independent individual, and as such it cannot be created or destroyed. It is only travelling through various states.

Naturally, the question arises, where was it all this time? The Hindu philosophers say, "It was passing through different bodies in the physical sense, or, really and metaphysically speaking, passing through different mental planes."

Are there any proofs apart from the teachings of the Vedas upon which the doctrine of reincarnation has been founded by the Hindu philosophers? There are, and we hope to show later on that there are grounds as valid for it as for any other universally accepted doctrine. But, first, we will see what some of the greatest of modern European thinkers have thought about reincarnation.

I H Fichte, speaking about the immortality of the soul, says :

"It is true there is one analogy in nature which might be brought forth in refutation of the continuance. It is the well-known argument that everything that has a beginning in time must also perish at some period of time ; hence, that the claimed past existence of the soul necessarily implies its pre-existence. This is a fair conclusion, but, instead of being an objection to, it is rather an additional argument for its continuance. Indeed, one needs only to understand the full meaning of the metaphysico-physiological axiom, that in reality nothing can be created or annihilated, to recognise that the soul must have existed prior to its becoming visible in a physical body."

Schopenhauer, in his book, *"Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung,"* speaking about palingenesis, says :

"What sleep is for the individual, death is for the 'will.' It would not endure to continue the same actions and sufferings throughout an eternity without true gain, if memory and individuality remained to it. It flings them off, and this is Lethe, and through this sleep of death it reappears fitted out with another intellect as a new being, a new day tempts to new shores. These constant new births, then, constitute the succession of the life-dreams of a will which in itself is indestructible, until instructed and improved by so much and such various successive knowledge in a constantly new form, it abolishes and abrogates itself. It must not be neglected that even empirical grounds support a palingenesis of this kind. As a matter of fact, there does exist a connection between the birth of the newly appearing beings and the death of those that are worn out. It shows itself in the great fruitfulness of the human race, which appears as a consequence of devastating diseases. When in the fourteenth century the Black Death had for the most part depopulated the Old World, a quite abnormal fruitfulness appeared among the

human race, and twin-births were very frequent. The circumstance was also remarkable that none of the children born at this time obtained their full number of teeth ; thus nature, exerting itself to the utmost, was niggardly in details. This is related by F. Schnurrer, in his '*Chronik der Seuchen*,' 1825 Casper also, in his '*Ueber die Wahrscheinliche Lebensdauer des Menschen*,' 1835, confirms the principle that the number of births in a given population has the most decided influence upon the length of life and mortality in it, as this always keeps pace with mortality , so that always and everywhere the deaths and the births increase and decrease in like proportion, which he places beyond doubt by an accumulation of evidence collected from many lands and their various provinces And yet it is impossible that there can be a physical, causal connection between my early death and the fruitfulness of a marriage with which I have nothing to do, or conversely Thus here the metaphysical appears undeniable, and in a stupendous manner, as the immediate ground of explanation of the physical Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift , but there is and can be nothing freely given Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen , they are one being "

The great English philosopher Hume, nihilistic though he was, says in the sceptical essay on immortality "The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can listen to " The philosopher Lessing, with a deep poetical insight, asks "Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? "

Why should not I come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience? Do I



bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back.”

The arguments for and against the doctrine of a pre-existing soul reincarnating through many lives, have been many, and some of the greatest thinkers of all ages have taken up the gauntlet to defend it ; and so far as we can see, if there is an individual soul, that it existed before seems inevitable. If the soul is not an individual, but a combination of “Skandhas” (notions), as the “Madhyamikas” among the Buddhists insist, still they find pre-existence absolutely necessary to explain their position.

The argument showing the impossibility of an infinite existence beginning in time is unanswerable, though attempts have been made to ward it off by appealing to the omnipotence of God to do anything, however contrary to reason it may be. We are sorry to find this most fallacious argument proceeding from some of the most thoughtful persons.

In the first place, God being the universal and common cause of all phenomena, the question was to find the natural causes of certain phenomena in the human soul, and the *Deus ex machina* theory is therefore quite irrelevant. It amounts to nothing less than confession of ignorance. We can give that answer to every question asked in every branch of human knowledge, and stop all inquiry and therefore knowledge, altogether.

Secondly, this constant appeal to the omnipotence of God is only a word-puzzle. The cause, as cause, is and can only be known to us as sufficient for the effect, and nothing more. As such we have no more idea of an infinite effect than of an omnipotent cause. Moreover, all our ideas of God are only limited, even the idea of cause limits our idea of God. Thirdly, even taking the position for granted, we are not bound to allow any such absurd theories as “Something coming out of nothing,” or

“Infinity beginning in time,” so long as we can give a better explanation

A so-called great argument is made against the idea of pre-existence, by asserting that the majority of mankind are not conscious of it. To prove the validity of this argument, the party who offers it must prove that the whole of the soul of man is bound up in the faculty of memory. If memory be the test of existence, then all that part of our lives which is not now in it must be non-existent, and every person, who in a state of coma, or otherwise loses his memory, must be non-existent also.

The premises from which the inference is drawn of a previous existence, and that, too, on the plane of conscious action, as adduced by the Hindu philosophers, are chiefly these

First, how else to explain this world of inequalities? Here is one child born in the providence of a Just and Merciful God, with every circumstance conducing to his becoming a good and useful member of the human race, and perhaps at the same instant and in the same city another child is born, under circumstances every one of which is against his becoming good. We see children born to suffer, perhaps all their lives, and that owing to no fault of theirs. Why should it be so? What is the cause? Of whose ignorance is it the result? If not the child's, why should it suffer, for its parents' actions?

It is much better to confess ignorance than to try to evade the question by the allurements of future enjoyments in proportion to the evil here, or by posing “mysteries.” Not only undeserved suffering forced upon us by any agent is immoral—not to say unjust—but even the future-making-up theory has no legs to stand upon.

How many of the miserably born, struggle towards a higher life, and how many more succumb to the circumstances they are placed under? Should those who grow worse and more wicked by being forced to be born under

evil circumstances, be rewarded in the future for the wickedness of their lives? In that case, the more wicked the man is here, the better will be his deserts hereafter.

There is no other way to vindicate the glory and the liberty of the human soul and reconcile the inequalities and the horrors of this world, than by placing the whole burden upon the legitimate cause—our own independent actions, or Karma. Not only so, but every theory of the creation of the soul from nothing inevitably leads to fatalism and preordination, and, instead of a Merciful Father, places before us a hideous, cruel, and an ever-angry God to worship. And so far as the power of religion for good or evil is concerned, this theory of a created soul, leading to its corollaries of fatalism and predestination, is responsible for the horrible idea prevailing among Christians and Mohammedans—that the heathens are the lawful victims of their swords—and all the horrors that have followed and are following it still.

But an argument which the philosophers of the Nyâya school have always advanced in favour reincarnation, and which to us seems conclusive, is this: our experiences cannot be annihilated. Our actions (Karma) though apparently disappearing, remain still unperceived (Adrishtam), and reappear again in their effect as tendencies (Pravrittis). Even little babies come with certain tendencies—fear of death, for example.

Now, if a tendency is the result of repeated actions, the tendencies with which we are born must be explained on that ground too. Evidently we could not have got them in this life, therefore we must have to seek for their genesis in the past. Now, it is also evident that some of our tendencies are the effects of the self-conscious efforts peculiar to man, and if it is true that we are born with such tendencies, it rigorously follows that their causes were conscious efforts in the past—that is, we must have been

on the same mental plane which we call the human plane, before this present life

So far as explaining the tendencies of the present life by past conscious efforts goes, the reincarnationists of India and the latest school of evolutionists are at one, the only difference is that the Hindus, as spiritualists, explain it by the conscious efforts of individual souls, and the materialistic school of evolutionists, by an hereditary physical transmission. The schools which hold to the theory of creation out of nothing, are entirely out of court.

The issue has to be fought out between the reincarnationists—who hold that all experiences are stored up as tendencies in the subject of those experiences, the individual soul, and are transmitted by reincarnation of that unbroken individuality—and the materialists, who hold that the brain is the subject of all actions and the theory of the transmission through cells.

It is thus that the doctrine of reincarnation assumes an infinite importance to our mind, for the fight between reincarnation and mere cellular transmission is, in reality, the fight between spiritualism and materialism. If cellular transmission is the all-sufficient explanation, materialism is inevitable, and there is no necessity for the theory of a soul. If it is not a sufficient explanation, the theory of an individual soul bringing into this life the experiences of the past is as absolutely true. There is no escape from the alternative, reincarnation or materialism. Which shall we accept?

## ON DR. PAUL DEUSSEN<sup>1</sup>

More than a decade has passed since a young German student, one of eight children of a not very well-to-do clergyman, heard on a certain day Professor Lassen lecturing on a language and literature new—very new even at that time—to European scholars, namely, Sanskrit. The lectures were of course free, for even now it is impossible for any one in any European University to make a living by teaching Sanskrit, unless indeed the University backs him.

Lassen was almost the last of that heroic band of German scholars, the pioneers of Sanskrit scholarship in Germany. Heroic certainly they were—what interest except their pure and unselfish love of knowledge could German scholars have had at that time in Indian literature? The veteran professor was expounding a chapter of *Sakuntalâ*, and on that day there was no one present more eagerly and attentively listening to Lassen's exposition than our young student. The subject-matter of the exposition was of course interesting and wonderful, but more wonderful was that strange language, the strange sounds of which, although uttered with all those difficult peculiarities that Sanskrit consonants are subjected to in the mouths of unaccustomed Europeans, had strange fascination for him. He returned to his lodgings, but that night sleep could not make him oblivious of what he had heard. A glimpse of a hitherto unknown land had been given to him, a land far more gorgeous in its colours than any he had yet seen, and having a power of fascination never yet experienced by his young and ardent soul.

Naturally his friends were anxiously looking forward

<sup>1</sup> Written for the *Brahmavadin*, 1896

to the ripening of his brilliant parts, and expected that he would soon enter a learned profession which might bring him respect, fame, and, above all, a good salary and a high position. But then there was this Sanskrit! The vast majority of European scholars had not even heard of it then; as for making it pay—I have already said that such a thing is impossible even now. Yet his desire to learn it was strong.

It has unfortunately become hard for us modern Indians to understand how it could be like that, nevertheless, there are to be met with in Benares and Nadia and other places even now, some old as well as young persons among our Pandits, and mostly among the Sannyâsins, who are mad with this kind of thirst for knowledge for its own sake. Students, not placed in the midst of the luxurious surroundings and materials of the modern Europeanised Hindu, and with a thousand times less facilities for study, poring over manuscripts in the flickering light of an oil lamp, night after night, which alone would have been enough to completely destroy the eye-sight of the students of any other nation, travelling on foot hundreds of miles, begging their way all along, in search of a rare manuscript or a noted teacher, and wonderfully concentrating all the energy of their body and mind upon their one object of study, year in and year out, till the hair turns grey and the infirmity of age overtakes them,—such students have not, through God's mercy, as yet disappeared altogether from our country. Whatever India now holds as a proud possession, has been undeniably the result of such labour on the part of her worthy sons in days gone by, and the truth of this remark will become at once evident on comparing the depth and solidity as well as the unselfishness and the earnestness of purpose of India's ancient scholarship with the results attained by our modern Indian Universities. Unselfish and genuine zeal for real scholarship and honest earnest thought must again become

dominant in the life of our countrymen, if they are ever to rise to occupy among nations a rank worthy of their own historic past. It is this kind of desire for knowledge which has made Germany what she is now—one of the foremost, if not the foremost, among the nations of the world.

Yes, the desire to learn Sanskrit was strong in the heart of this German student. It was long, up-hill work—this learning of Sanskrit; with him too it was the same world-old story of successful scholars and their hard work, their privations and their indomitable energy—and also the same glorious conclusion of a really heroic achievement. He thus achieved success, and now—not only Europe but all India knows this man, Paul Deussen, who is the Professor of Philosophy in the University of Kiel. I have seen professors of Sanskrit in America and in Europe. Some of them are very sympathetic towards Vedantic thought. I admire their intellectual acumen and their lives of unselfish labour. But Paul Deussen—or, as he prefers to be called in Sanskrit, Deva-Sena—and the veteran Max Muller, have impressed me as being the truest friends of India and Indian thought. It will always be among the most pleasing episodes in my life—my first visit to this ardent Vedântist at Kiel, his gentle wife who travelled with him in India, and his little daughter, the darling of his heart—and our travelling together through Germany and Holland to London, and the pleasant meetings we had in and about London.

The earliest school of Sanskritists in Europe entered into the study of Sanskrit with more imagination than critical ability. They knew a little, expected much from that little, and often tried to make too much of what little they knew. Then, in those days even, such vagaries as the estimation of Sakuntala as forming the high water-mark of Indian philosophy were not altogether unknown! These were naturally followed by a reactionary band of superficial critics more than real scholars of any kind, who knew

little or nothing of Sanskrit, expected nothing from Sanskrit studies, and ridiculed everything from the East. While criticising the unsound imaginativeness of the early school to whom everything in Indian literature was rose and musk, these, in their turn, went into speculations which, to say the least, were equally highly unsound and indeed very venturesome. And their boldness was very naturally helped by the fact that these over-hasty and unsympathetic scholars and critics were addressing an audience whose entire qualification for pronouncing any judgment in the matter was their absolute ignorance of Sanskrit. What a medley of results from such critical scholarship! Suddenly, on one fine morning, the poor Hindu woke up to find that everything that was his was gone, one strange race had snatched away from him his arts, another his architecture, and a third, whatever there was of his ancient sciences, why, even his religion was not his own! Yes—that too had migrated into India in the wake of a Pehlevi cross of stone!! After a feverish period of such treading-on-each-other's-toes of original research, a better state of things has dawned. It has now been found out that mere adventure without some amount of the capital of real and ripe scholarship produces nothing but ridiculous failure even in the business of Oriental research, and that the traditions in India are not to be rejected with supercilious contempt, as there is really more in them than most people ever dream of.

There is now happily coming into existence in Europe a new type of Sanskrit scholars, reverential, sympathetic, and learned—reverential because they are a better stamp of men, and sympathetic because they are learned. And the link which connects the new portion of the chain with the old one, is, of course, our Max Müller. We Hindus certainly owe more to him than to any other Sanskrit scholar in the West, and I am simply astonished when I think of the gigantic task which he, in his



enthusiasm, undertook as a young man and brought to a successful conclusion in his old age. Think of this man without any help, poring over old manuscripts hardly legible to the Hindus themselves, and in a language to acquire which takes a lifetime even in India—without even the help of any needy Pandit whose "brains could be picked," as the Americans say, for ten shillings a month, and a mere mention of his name in the introduction to some book of "very new researches"—think of this man, spending days and sometimes months in elucidating the correct reading and the meaning of a word or a sentence in the commentary of Sâyana (as he has himself told me), and in the end succeeding in making an easy road through the forest of Vedic literature for all others to go along, think of him and his work, and then say what he really is to us! Of course we need not all agree with him in all that he says in his many writings, certainly such an agreement is impossible. But agreement or no agreement, the fact remains that this one man has done a thousand times more for the preservation, spreading, and appreciation of the literature of our forefathers than any of us can ever hope to do, and he has done it all with a heart which is full of the sweet balm of love and veneration.

If Max Muller is thus the old pioneer of the new movement, Deussen is certainly one of its younger advance-guard. Philological interest had hidden long from view the gems of thought and spirituality to be found in the mine of our ancient Scriptures. Max Müller brought out a few of them and exhibited them to the public gaze, compelling attention to them by means of his authority as the foremost philologist. Deussen, unhampered by any philological leanings and possessing the training of a philosopher singularly well versed in the speculations of ancient Greece and modern Germany, took up the cue and plunged boldly into the metaphysical depths of the Upanishads, found them to be fully safe and satisfying, and then—

equally boldly declared the fact before the whole world Deussen is certainly the freest among scholars in the expression of his opinion about the Vedanta He never stops to think about the "What they would say" of the vast majority of scholars We indeed require bold men in this world to tell us bold words about truth ; and nowhere is this more true now than in Europe where, through the fear of social opinion and such other causes, there has been enough in all conscience of the whitewashing and apologising attitude among scholars towards creeds and customs which, in all probability, not many among them really believe in The greater is the glory therefore to Max Muller and to Deussen for their bold and open advocacy of truth ! May they be as bold in showing to us our defects, the later corruptions in our thought-systems in India, especially in their application to our social needs ! Just now we very much require the help of such genuine friends as these to check the growing virulence of the disease, very prevalent in India, of running either to the one extreme of slavish panegyrists who cling to every village superstition as the innermost essence of the Shâstras, or to the other extreme of demoniacal denouncers who see no good in us and in our history, and will, if they can, at once dynamite all the social and spiritual organisations of our ancient land of religion and philosophy

---

## ON PROFESSOR MAX MULLER<sup>1</sup>

Though the ideal of work of our *Brahmavâdin* should always be— कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन—“To work thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof,” yet no sincere worker passes out of the field of activity without making himself known and catching at least a few rays of light

The beginning of our work has been splendid, and the steady earnestness shown by our friends is beyond all praise. Sincerity of conviction and purity of motive will surely gain the day, and even a small minority, armed with these, is surely destined to prevail against all odds.

Keep away from all insincere claimants to supernatural illumination; not that such illumination is impossible, but, my friends, in this world of ours “lust, or gold, or fame” is the hidden motive behind ninety per cent of all such claims, and, of the remaining ten per cent, nine per cent are cases which require the tender care of physicians more than the attention of metaphysicians

The first great thing to accomplish is to establish a character, to obtain, as we say, the प्रतिष्ठिता मज्ञा (established Wisdom). This applies equally to individuals and to organised bodies of individuals. Do not fret because the world looks with suspicion at every new attempt, even though it be in the path of spirituality. The poor world, how often has it been cheated! The more the ससार, that is, the worldly aspect of life, looks at any growing movement with eyes of suspicion, or, even better still, presents to it a semi-hostile front, so much the better is it for the movement. If there is any truth this movement has to disseminate, any need it is born to supply, soon will

<sup>1</sup> Written for the *Brahmavâdin*, from London, June 6, 1896

condemnation be changed into praise, and contempt converted into love. People in these days are apt to take up religion as a means to some social or political end. Beware of this. Religion is its own end. That religion which is only a means to worldly well-being is not religion, whatever else it may be, and it is sheer blasphemy against God and man to hold that man has no other end than the free and full enjoyment of all the pleasure of his senses.

Truth, purity and unselfishness—wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these, one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition.

Above all, beware of compromises. I do not mean that you are to get into antagonism with anybody, but you have to hold on to your own principles in weal or woe, and never adjust them to others' "fads," through the greed of getting supporters. Your Atman is the support of the universe—whose support do you stand in need of? Wait with patience and love and strength, if helpers are not ready now, they will come in time. Why should we be in a hurry? The real working force of all great work is in its almost unperceived beginnings.

Who ever could have thought that the life and teachings of a boy born of poor Brâhman parents in a wayside Bengal village would, in a few years, reach such distant lands as our ancestors never even dreamed of? I refer to Bhagavân Râmakrishna. Do you know that Prof. Max Muller has already written an article on Sri Ramakrishna in the "Nineteenth Century," and will be very glad to write a larger and fuller account of his life and teachings, if sufficient materials are forthcoming? What an extraordinary man is Prof. Max Muller! I paid a visit to him a few days ago. I should say, that I went to pay my respects to him, for whosoever loves Sri Ramakrishna, whatever be his or her sect, or creed, or nationality, my visit to that person I hold as a pilgrimage. सङ्गत्तानां च ये भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः

—“They who are devoted to those who love Me—they are My best devotees ” Is that not true?

The Professor was first induced to inquire about the power behind, which led to sudden and momentous changes in the life of the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the great Brâhmo leader, and since then, he has been an earnest student and admirer of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. “Ramakrishna is worshipped by thousands to-day, Professor,” I said. “To whom else shall worship be accorded, if not to such?” was the answer. The Professor was kindness itself, and asked Mr. Sturdy and myself to lunch with him. He showed us several colleges in Oxford, and the Bodleian library. He also accompanied us to the railway station, and all this he did because, as he said, “It is not every day one meets a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.”

The visit was really a revelation to me. That nice little house in its setting of a beautiful garden, the silver-headed sage, with a face calm and benign, and forehead smooth as a child's in spite of seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind; that noble wife, the help-mate of his life through his long and arduous task of exciting interest, overriding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India—the trees, the flowers, the calmness, and the clear sky—all these sent me back in imagination to the glorious days of Ancient India, the days of our Brahmarshis and Râjarshis, the days of the great Vânaprasthas, the days of Arundhatis and Vasishthas.

It was neither the Philologist nor the Scholar that I saw, but a soul that is every day realising its oneness with the Brahman, a heart that is every moment expanding to reach oneness with the Universal. Where others lose themselves in the desert of dry details, he has struck the well-spring of life. Indeed his heart-beats have caught

the rhythm of the Upanishads—आत्मानं वै विजानथ अन्याम् वाचं विमुञ्च —“Know the Atman alone, and leave off all other talk ”

Although a world-moving scholar and philosopher, his learning and philosophy have only led him higher and higher to the realisation of the Spirit, his अपरा विद्या (lower knowledge) has indeed helped him to reach the परा विद्या (higher knowledge) This is real learning, विद्या ददाति विनयं —“Knowledge gives humility ” Of what use is knowledge if it does not show us the way to the Highest?

And what love he bears towards India ! I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland ! Endued with an extraordinary, and, at the same time, intensely active mind, he has lived and moved in the world of Indian thought for fifty years or more, and watched the sharp interchange of light and shade in the interminable forest of Sanskrit literature with deep interest and heart-felt love, till they have all sunk into his very soul and coloured his whole being.

Max Muller is a Vedantist of Vedantists He has, indeed, caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta, in the midst of all its settings of harmonies and discords—the one light that lightens the sects and creeds of the world, the Vedanta, the one principle of which all religions are only applications And what was Ramakrishna Paramahansa ? The practical demonstration of this ancient principle, the embodiment of India that is past, and a foreshadowing of the India that is to be, the bearer of spiritual light unto nations The jeweller alone can understand the worth of jewels , this is an old proverb Is it a wonder that this Western sage does study and appreciate every new star in the firmament of Indian thought, before even the Indians themselves realise its magnitude ?

“When are you coming to India ? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light,” I said The

face of the aged sage brightened up—there was almost a tear in his eye, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out—"I would not return then ; you would have to cremate me there " Further questions seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored the holy secrets of man's heart Who knows but that it was what the Poet has said—

तच्चैतस्मा स्मरति नूनमवीक्षपूर्वं ।  
भावस्थिराणि जननान्तन सौहृदानि ॥

"He remembers with his mind the friendships of former births, firmly rooted in his heart."

His life has been a blessing to the world , and may it be many, many years more, before he changes the present plane of his existence !

---

## SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PAVHARI BABA

To help the suffering world was the gigantic task to which the Buddha gave prominence, brushing aside for the time being almost all other phases of religion ; yet he had to spend years in self-searching, to realise the great truth of the utter hollowness of clinging to a selfish individuality. A more unselfish and untiring worker is beyond our most sanguine imagination, yet, who had harder struggles to realise the meaning of things, than he ? It holds good in all times that the greater the work, the more must have been the power of realisation behind. Working out the details of an already laid out masterly plan may not require much concentrated thought to back it, but the great impulses are only transformed great concentrations. The theory alone perhaps is sufficient for small exertions, but the push that creates the ripple is very different from the impulsion that raises the wave, and yet the ripple is only the embodiment of a bit of the power that generates the wave.

Facts, naked facts, gaunt and terrible may be, truth, bare truth, though its vibrations may snap every chord of the heart, motive selfless and sincere, though to reach it, limb after limb has to be lopped off—such are to be arrived at, found, and gained, before the mind—on the lower plane of activity can raise huge work-waves. The fine accumulates round itself the gross as it rolls on through time and becomes manifest, the unseen crystallises into the seen, the possible becomes the practical, the cause the effect, and thought, muscular work.

The cause, held back by a thousand circumstances, will manifest itself, sooner or later, as the effect, and potent thought, however powerless at present, will have its glorious day on the plane of material activity. Nor



is the standard correct which judges of everything by its power to contribute to our sense-enjoyment.

The lower the animal, the more is its enjoyment in the senses, the more it lives in the senses. Civilisation, true civilisation, should mean the power of taking the animal-man out of his sense-life—by giving him visions and tastes of planes much higher—and not external comforts.

Man knows this instinctively. He may not formulate it to himself under all circumstances. He may form very divergent opinions about the life of thought. But it is there, pressing itself to the front, in spite of everything, making him pay reverence to the hoodoo-worker, the medicine-man, the magician, the priest, or the professor of science. The growth of man can only be gauged by his power of living in the higher atmosphere where the senses are left behind, the amount of the pure thought-oxygen his lungs can breathe in, and the amount of time he can spend on that height.

As it is, it is an obvious fact that, with the exception of what is taken up by the necessities of life, the man of culture is loth to spend his time on so-called comforts, and even necessary actions are performed with lessened zeal, as the process moves forward.

Even luxuries are arranged according to ideas and ideals, to make them reflect as much of thought-life as possible—and this is Art.

“—As the one fire coming into the universe is manifesting itself in every form, and yet is more besides”—yes, infinitely more besides! A bit, only a small bit, of Infinite Thought can be made to descend to the plane of matter, to minister to our comfort—the rest will not allow itself to be rudely handled. The Superfine always eludes our view and laughs at our attempts to bring it down. In this case, Mahomet must go to the mountain, and no ‘nay’. Man must raise himself to that higher plane, if he wants to enjoy its beauties, to bathe in its light, to feel his

life pulsating in unison with the Cause-Life of the Universe

It is Knowledge that opens the door to regions of wonder, Knowledge that makes a god of an animal and that Knowledge which brings us to That, "knowing which everything else is known" (the heart of all knowledge—whose pulsation brings life to all sciences—the Science of Religion) is certainly the highest, as it alone can make man live a complete and perfect life in thought. Blessed be the land which has styled it "Supreme Science!"

The principle is seldom found perfectly expressed in the practical, yet the ideal is never lost. On the one hand, it is our duty never to lose sight of the ideal, whether we can approach it with sensible steps, or crawl towards it with imperceptible motion. On the other hand, the truth is, it is always looming in front of us—though we try our best to cover its light with our hands before our eyes.

The life of the practical is in the ideal. It is the ideal that has penetrated the whole of our lives, whether we philosophise, or perform the hard, everyday duties of life. The rays of the ideal, reflected and refracted in various straight or tortuous lines, are pouring in through every aperture and windhole, and consciously or unconsciously, every function has to be performed in its light, every object has to be seen transformed, heightened, or deformed by it. It is the ideal that has made us what we are, and will make us what we are going to be. It is the power of the ideal that has enshrouded us, and is felt in our joys or sorrows, in our great acts or mean doings, in our virtues and vices.

If such is the power of the ideal over the practical, the practical is no less potent in forming the ideal. The truth of the ideal is in the practical. The fruition of the ideal has been through the sensing of the practical. That the ideal is there is a proof of the existence of the practical somehow, somewhere. The ideal may be vaster, yet it

is the multiplication of little bits of the practical. The ideal mostly is the summed-up, generalised, practical units.

The power of the ideal is in the practical. Its work on us is in and through the practical. Through the practical, the ideal is brought down to our sense-perception, changed into a form fit for our assimilation. Of the practical we make the steps to rise to the ideal. On that we build our hopes, it gives us courage to work.

One man who manifests the ideal in his life is more powerful than legions, whose words can paint it in the most beautiful colours, and spin out the finest principles.

Systems of philosophy mean nothing to mankind, or at best only intellectual gymnastics, unless they are joined to religion and can get a body of men struggling to bring them down to practical life with more or less success. Even systems having not one positive hope, when taken up by groups and made somewhat practical, had always a multitude, and the most elaborate positive systems of thought withered away without it.

Most of us cannot keep our activities on a par with our thought-lives. Some blessed ones can. Most of us seem to lose the power of work as we think deeper, and the power of deep thought if we work more. That is why most great thinkers have to leave to time the practical realisation of their great ideals. Their thoughts must wait for more active brains to work them out and spread them. Yet as we write, comes before us a vision of him, the charioteer of Arjuna, standing in his chariot between the contending hosts, his left hand curbing the fiery steeds—a mail-clad warrior, whose eagle-glance sweeps over the vast army, and as if by instinct weighs every detail of the battle array of both parties—at the same time that we hear, as it were, falling from his lips, and thrilling the awe-struck Arjuna, that most marvellous secret of work, "He who finds rest in the midst of activity, and activity in rest,

he is the wise amidst men, he the Yogî, he is the doer of all work ”

This is the IDEAL complete But few ever reach it. We must take things as they are, therefore, and be contented to piece together different aspects of human perfection, developed in different individuals.

In religion, we have the man of intense thought, of great activity in bringing help to others, the man of boldness and daring self-realisation, and the man of meekness and humility

The subject of this sketch was a man of wonderful humility and intense self-realisation

Born of Brâhman parents in a village near Guzi, Benares, Pavhârî Bâbâ, as he was called in after life, came to study and live with his uncle in Ghazipur, when a mere boy At present, Hindu ascetics are split up into the main divisions of Sannyâsins, Yogins, Vairâgins, and Panthis The Sannyasins are the followers of Advaitism after Sankarâchârya ; the Yogins, though following the Advaita system, are specialised as practising the different systems of Yoga , the Vairagins are the dualistic disciples of Râmânujâchârya and others , the Panthis, professing either philosophy, are orders founded during the Mohammedan rule The uncle of Pavhari Baba belonged to the Ramanuja or Sri sect, and was a Naisthika Brahmachârin, i e , one who takes the vow of life-long celibacy He had a piece of land on the banks of the Ganges, about two miles to the north of Ghazipur, and had established himself there Having several nephews, he took Pavhari Baba into his home, and adopted him, intending him to succeed to his property and position.

Not much is known of the life of Pavhari Baba at this period Neither does there seem to have been any indication of those peculiarities which made him so well known in after years He is remembered merely as a diligent

student of Vyâkarana and Nyâya, and the theology of his sect, and as an active lively boy, whose jollity at times found vent in hard practical jokes at the expense of his fellow-students.

Thus the future saint passed his young days, going through the routine duties of Indian students of the old school ; and except that he showed more than ordinary application to his studies, and a remarkable aptitude for learning languages, there was scarcely anything in that open, cheerful, playful student life to foreshadow the tremendous seriousness which was to culminate in a most curious and awful sacrifice

Then something happened which made the young scholar feel, perhaps for the first time, the serious import of life, and made him raise his eyes, so long riveted on books, to scan his mental horizon critically, and crave for something in religion which was a fact, and not mere book-lore His uncle passed away One face, on which all the love of that young heart was concentrated, had gone, and the ardent boy, struck to the core with grief, determined to supply the gap with a vision that can never change

In India, for everything, we want a Guru Books, we Hindus are persuaded, are only outlines. The living secrets must be handed down from Guru to disciple, in every art, in every science, much more so in religion. From time immemorial earnest souls in India have always retired to secluded spots, to carry on uninterrupted their study of the mysteries of the inner life, and even to-day there is scarcely a forest, a hill, or a sacred spot which rumour does not consecrate as the abode of a great sage The saying is well-known—

“The water is pure that flows,  
The monk is pure that goes ”

As a rule, those who take to the celibate religious life in India spend a good deal of their life in journeying

through various countries of the Indian continent, visiting different shrines—thus keeping themselves from rust, as it were, and at the same time bringing religion to the door of everyone. A visit to the four great sacred places, situated in the four corners of India, is considered almost necessary to all who renounce the world.

All these considerations may have had weight with our young Brahmacharin, but we are sure that the chief among them was the thirst for knowledge. Of his travels we know but little, except that, from his knowledge of Dravidian languages, in which a good deal of the literature of his sect is written, and his thorough acquaintance with the old Bengali of the Vaishnavas of Sri Chaitanya's order, we infer that his stay in Southern India and Bengal could not have been very short.

But on his visit to one place, the friends of his youth lay great stress. It was on the top of mount Girnâr in Kathiawad, they say, that he was first initiated into the mysteries of practical Yoga.

It was this mountain which was so holy to the Buddhists. At its foot is the huge rock on which is inscribed the first-deciphered edict of the "divinest of monarchs," Asoka. Beneath it, through centuries of oblivion, lay the conclave of gigantic Stupas, forest covered, and long taken for hillocks of the Girnar range. No less sacred is it still held by the sect of which Buddhism is now thought to be a revised edition, and which strangely enough did not venture into the field of architectural triumphs till its world-conquering descendant had melted away into modern Hinduism. Girnar is celebrated amongst Hindus as having been sanctified by the stay of the great Avadhuta Guru Dattâtreyâ, and rumour has it that great and perfected Yogis are still to be met with by the fortunate, on its top.

The next turning-point in the career of our youthful Brahmacharin we trace to the banks of the Ganges some-

where near Benares, as the disciple of a Sannyasin who practised Yoga, and lived in a hole dug in the high bank of the river. To this Yogi can be traced the after-practice of our saint, of living inside a deep-tunnel, dug out of the ground on the bank of the Ganges, near Ghazipur. Yogis have always inculcated the advisability of living in caves or other spots where the temperature is even, and where sounds do not disturb the mind. We also learn, that he was about the same time studying the Advaita system under a Sannyasin in Benares.

After years of travel, study, and discipline, the young Brahmacharin came back to the place where he had been brought up. Perhaps his uncle, if alive, would have found in the face of the boy the same light which of yore a greater sage saw in that of his son, and exclaimed, "Child, thy face to-day shines with the glory of Brahman!" But those that welcomed him to his home were only the companions of his boyhood—most of them gone into, and claimed for ever by, the world of small thoughts and eternal toil.

Yet there was a change, a mysterious—to them an awe-inspiring—change, in the whole character and demeanour of that school-day friend and playmate whom they had been wont to understand. But it did not arouse in them emulation, or the same research. It was the mystery of a man who had gone beyond this world of trouble and materialism, and this was enough. They instinctively respected it, and asked no questions.

Meanwhile, the peculiarities of the saint began to grow more and more pronounced. He had a cave dug in the ground, like his friend near Benares, and began to go into it and remain there for hours. Then began a process of the most awful dietary discipline. The whole day he worked in his little Ashrama, conducted the worship of his beloved Râmachandra, cooked good dinners—in which

art he is said to have been extraordinarily proficient—distributed the whole of the offered food amongst his friends and the poor, looked after their comforts till night came, and when they were in their beds, the young man stole out, crossed the Ganges by swimming, and reached the other shore. There he would spend the whole night in the midst of his practices and prayers, come back before daybreak and wake up his friends, and then begin once more the routine business of “worshipping others,” as we say in India.

His own diet, in the meanwhile, was being attenuated every day, till it came down, we are told, to a handful of bitter Nimbā leaves, or a few pods of red pepper, daily. Then he gave up going nightly to the woods on the other bank of the river, and took more and more to his cave. For days and months, we are told, he would be in the hole, absorbed in meditation, and then come out. Nobody knows what he subsisted on during these long intervals, so the people called him Pav-âhârî (or air-eater) Bâbâ (or father).

He would never during his life leave this place. Once, however, he was so long inside the cave that people gave him up as dead, but after a long time, the Baba emerged, and gave a Bhândârâ (feast) to a large number of Sâdhus.

When not absorbed in his meditations, he would be living in a room above the mouth of his cave, and during this time he would receive visitors. His fame began to spread, and to Râi Gagan Chandra Râi Bahadur of the Opium Department, Ghazipur—a gentleman whose innate nobility and spirituality have endeared him to all—we owe our introduction to the saint.

Like many others in India, there was no striking or stirring external activity in this life. It was one more example of that Indian ideal of teaching through life and not through words, and that Truth bears fruit in those lives only which have become ready to receive. Persons of



this type are entirely averse to preaching what they know, for they are for ever convinced that it is internal discipline alone that leads to Truth, and not words. Religion to them is no motive to social conduct, but an intense search after, and realisation of, *Truth* in this life. They deny the greater potentiality of one moment over another, and, every moment in eternity being equal to every other, they insist on seeing the Truths of Religion face to face now and here, not waiting for death.

The present writer had occasion to ask the saint the reason of his not coming out of his cave to help the world. At first, with his native humility and humour, he gave the following strong reply

“A certain wicked person was caught in some criminal act, and had his nose cut off as a punishment. Ashamed to show his noseless features to the world, and disgusted with himself, he fled into a forest, and there, spreading a tiger-skin on the ground, he would feign deep meditation, whenever he thought anybody was about. This conduct, instead of keeping people off, drew them in crowds to pay their respects to this wonderful saint, and he found that his forest-life had brought him once again an easy living. Thus years went by. At last the people around became very eager to listen to some instruction from the lips of the silent meditative saint, and one young man was specially anxious to be initiated into the order. It came to such a pass that any more delay in that line would undermine the reputation of the saint. So one day he broke his silence, and asked the enthusiastic young man to bring on the morrow a sharp razor with him. The young man, glad at the prospect of the great desire of his life being speedily fulfilled, came early the next morning with the razor. The noseless saint led him to a very retired spot in the forest, took the razor in his hand, opened it, and with one stroke cut off his nose, repeating in a solemn voice, ‘Young man, this has been my initiation

into the order 'The same I give to you Do you transmit it diligently to others when the opportunity comes!' The young man could not divulge the secret of this wonderful initiation for shame, and carried out to the best of his ability the injunctions of his master Thus a whole sect of nose-cut saints spread over the country Do you want me to be the founder of another such?"

Later on, in a more serious mood, another query brought the answer "Do you think that physical help is the only help possible? Is it not possible that one mind can help other minds, even without the activity of the body?"

When asked on another occasion why he, a great Yogi, should perform Karma, such as pouring oblations into the sacrificial fire, and worshipping the image of Sri Raghunâthji, which are practices only meant for beginners, the reply came "Why do you take for granted that everybody makes Karma for his own good? Cannot one perform Karma for others?"

Then again, everyone has heard of the thief who had come to steal from his Ashrama, and who at the sight of the saint got frightened and ran away, leaving the goods he had stolen in a bundle behind, how the saint took the bundle up, ran after the thief, and came up to him after miles of hard running, how the saint laid the bundle at the feet of the thief, and with folded hands and tears in his eyes asked his pardon for his own intrusion, and begged hard for his acceptance of the goods, since they belonged to him, and not to himself

We are also told, on reliable authority, how once he was bitten by a cobra, and though he was given up for hours as dead, he revived, and when his friends asked him about it, he only replied that the cobra "was a messenger from the Beloved"

And well may we believe this, knowing as we do the extreme gentleness, humility, and love of his nature. All

sorts of physical illness were to him only "messengers from the Beloved," and he could not even bear to hear them called by any other name, even while he himself suffered tortures from them. This silent love and gentleness had conveyed themselves to the people around, and those who have travelled through the surrounding villages can testify to the unspoken influence of this wonderful man. Of late, he did not show himself to anyone. When out of his underground retiring-place, he would speak to people with a closed door between. His presence above ground was always indicated by the rising smoke of oblations in the sacrificial fire, or the noise of getting things ready for worship.

One of his great peculiarities was his entire absorption at the time in the task in hand, however trivial. The same amount of care and attention was bestowed in cleaning a copper pot as in the worship of Sri Raghunathji, he himself being the best example of the secret he once told us of work, "The means should be loved and cared for as if it were the end itself."

Neither was his humility kindred to that which means pain and anguish or self-abasement. It sprang naturally from the realisation of that which he once so beautifully explained to us, "O King, the Lord is the wealth of those who have nothing—yes, of those," he continued, "who have thrown away all desires of possession, even that of one's own soul." He would never directly teach, as that would be assuming the rôle of a teacher, and placing himself in a higher position than another. But once the spring was touched, the fountain welled up with infinite wisdom, yet always the replies were indirect.

In appearance he was tall and rather fleshy, had but one eye, and looked much younger than his real age. His voice was the sweetest we have ever heard. For the last ten years or more of his life, he had withdrawn himself entirely from the gaze of mankind. A few potatoes and

a little butter were placed behind the door of his room, and sometimes during the night this was taken in when he was not in Samâdhî, and was living above ground. When inside his cave, he did not require even these. Thus, this silent life went on, witnessing to the science of Yôga, and a living example of purity, humility and love.

The smoke, which as we have said already, indicated his coming out of Samadhî, one day smelled of burning flesh. The people around could not guess what was happening, but when the smell became overpowering, and the smoke was seen to rise up in volumes, they broke open the door, and found that the great Yogi had offered himself as the last oblation to his sacrificial fire, and very soon a heap of ashes was all that remained of his body.

Let us remember the words of Kâlidâsa—"Fools blame the actions of the great, because they are extraordinary, and their reasons past the finding-out of ordinary mortals."

Yet, knowing him as we do, we can only venture to suggest that the saint saw that his last moments had come, and not wishing to cause trouble to any, even after death, performed this last sacrifice of an Arya, in full possession of body and mind.

The present writer owes a deep debt of gratitude to the departed saint and dedicates these lines, however unworthy, to the memory of one of the greatest Masters he has loved and served

---

## ARYANS AND TAMILIANS

A veritable ethnological museum! Possibly, the half-ape skeleton of the recently discovered Sumatra link will be found on search here, too. The Dolmens are not wanting. Flint implements can be dug out almost anywhere. The lake-dwellers—at least the river-dwellers—must have been abundant at one time. The cave-men and leaf-wearers still persist. The primitive hunters living in forests are in evidence in various parts of the country. Then there are the more historical varieties—the Negrito-Kolarian, the Dravidian and the Aryan. To these have been added from time to time dashes of nearly all the known races, and a great many yet unknown—various breeds of Mongoloids, Mongols, Tartars, and the so-called Aryans of the philologists. Well, here are the Persian, the Greek, the Yunchi, the Hun, the Chin, the Scythian and many more, melted and fused, the Jews, Parsis, Arabs, Mongols, down to the descendants of the Vikings and the lords of the German forests, yet undigested—an ocean of humanity, composed of these race-waves seething, boiling, struggling, constantly changing form, rising to the surface, and spreading and swallowing little ones, again subsiding—this is the history of India.

In the midst of this madness of nature, one of the contending factions discovered a method, and through the force of its superior culture, succeeded in bringing the largest number of Indian humanity under its sway.

The superior race styled themselves the Aryas or Nobles, and their method was the Varnâshramâchâra—the so-called caste.

Of course the men of the Aryan race reserved for themselves, consciously or unconsciously, a good many privileges, yet the institution of caste has always been

very flexible, sometimes too flexible to ensure a healthy uprise of the races very low in the scale of culture.

It put, theoretically at least, the whole of India under the guidance—not of wealth, nor of the sword—but of intellect,—intellect chastened and controlled by spirituality. The leading caste in India is the highest of the Aryans—the Brâhmans

Though apparently different from the social methods of other nations, on close inspection, the Aryan method of caste will not be found so very different except on two points

The first is, in every other country the highest honour belongs to the Kshatriya—the man of the sword. The Pope of Rome will be glad to trace his descent to some robber baron on the banks of the Rhine. In India, the highest honour belongs to the man of peace—the Sharman, the Brahman, the man of God

The greatest Indian king would be gratified to trace his descent to some ancient sage who lived in the forest, probably a recluse, possessing nothing, dependent upon the villagers for his daily necessities, and all his life trying to solve the problems of this life and the life hereafter

The second point is, the difference of unit. The law of caste in every other country takes the individual man or woman as the sufficient unit. Wealth, power, intellect or beauty suffices for the individual to leave the status of birth and scramble up to anywhere he can

Here, the unit is all the members of a caste-community

Here too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to a higher or the highest. Only, in this birth-land of Altruism, one is compelled to take his whole caste along with him

In India, you cannot on account of your wealth, power or any other merit, leave your fellows behind and make common cause with your superiors—you cannot

deprive those who helped in your acquiring the excellence of any benefit therefrom, and give them in return only contempt. If you want to rise to a higher caste in India, you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in your onward path to hold you back.

This is the Indian method of fusion, and this has been going on from time immemorial. For in India, more than elsewhere, such words as Aryans and Dravidians are only of philological import, the so-called craniological differentiation finding no solid ground to work upon.

Even so are the names Brahman, Kshatriya, etc. They simply represent the status of a community in itself continuously fluctuating, even when it has reached the summit and all further endeavours are towards fixity of the type by non-marriage, by being forced to admit fresh groups, from lower castes or foreign lands, within its pale.

Whatever caste has the power of the sword, becomes Kshatriya, whatever learning, Brahman; whatever wealth, Vaishya.

The groups that have already reached the coveted goal, indeed, try to keep themselves aloof from the newcomers, by making sub-divisions in the same caste, but the fact remains that they coalesce in the long run. This is going on before our own eyes, all over India.

Naturally, a group having raised itself would try to preserve the privileges to itself. Hence, whenever it was possible to get the help of a king, the higher castes, especially the Brahmans, have tried to put down similar aspirations in lower castes, by the sword, if practicable. But the question is, did they succeed? Look closely into your Purânas and Upa-puranas, look especially into the local Khandas of the big Puranas, look round and see what is happening before your eyes, and you will find the answer.

We are, in spite of our various castes, and in spite of the modern custom of marriage restricted within the sub-

divisions of a caste (though this is not universal), a mixed race in every sense of the word

Whatever may be the import of the philological terms "Aryan" and "Tamilian," even taking for granted that both these grand sub-divisions of Indian humanity came from outside the Western frontier, the dividing line had been, from the most ancient times, one of language and not of blood. Not one of the epithets expressive of contempt for the ugly physical features of the Dasyus of the Vedas would apply to the great Tamilian race; in fact if there be a toss for good looks between the Aryans and Tamilians, no sensible man would dare prognosticate the result.

The super-arrogated excellence of birth of any caste in India is only pure myth, and in no part of India has it, we are sorry to say, found such congenial soil, owing to linguistic differences, as in the South.

We purposely refrain from going into the details of this social tyranny in the South, just as we have stopped ourselves from scrutinising the genesis of the various modern Brahmans and other castes. Sufficient for us to note the extreme tension of feeling that is evident between the Brahmans and non-Brahmans of the Madras Presidency.

We believe in Indian caste as one of the greatest social institutions that the Lord gave to man. We also believe that though the unavoidable defects, foreign persecutions, and, above all, the monumental ignorance and pride of many Brahmans who do not deserve the name, have thwarted, in many ways, the legitimate fructification of this most glorious Indian institution, it has already worked wonders for the land of Bharata and is destined to lead Indian humanity to its goal.

We earnestly entreat the Brahmans of the South not to forget the ideal of India—the production of a Universe of Brahmans, pure as purity, good as God Himself.



this was at the beginning, says the Mahâbhârata, and so will it be in the end.

Any one who claims to be a Brahman then, should prove his pretensions, first by manifesting that spirituality, and next by raising others to the same status. On the face of this it seems that most of them are only nursing a false pride of birth, and any schemer, native or foreign, who can pander to this vanity and inherent laziness, by fulsome sophistry, appears to satisfy most.

Beware, Brahmans, this is the sign of death! Arise and show your manhood, your Brahman-hood, by raising the non-Brahmans around you—not in the spirit of a master—not with the rotten canker of egotism crawling with superstitions and the charlatanry of East and West—but in the spirit of a servant. For verily he who knows how to serve knows how to rule.

The non-Brahmans also have been spending their energy in kindling the fire of caste hatred—vain and useless to solve the problem—to which every non-Hindu is only too glad to throw on a load of fuel.

Not a step forward can be made by these inter-caste quarrels, not one difficulty removed; only the beneficent onward march of events would be thrown back, possibly for centuries, if the fire bursts out into flames.

It would be a repetition of Buddhistic political blunders.

In the midst of this ignorant clamour and hatred, we are delighted to find Pandit D. Savariroyan pursuing the only legitimate and the only sensible course. Instead of wasting precious vitality in foolish and meaningless quarrels, Pandit Savariroyan has undertaken, in his articles on the "Admixture of the Aryan with Tamilian" in the *Siddhânta Deepikâ*, to clear away not only a lot of haze, created by a too adventurous Western philology, but to pave the way to a better understanding of the caste problem in the South.

Nobody ever got anything by begging. We get only what we deserve. The first step to deserve is to desire, and we desire with success what we feel ourselves worthy to get.

A gentle yet clear brushing off of the cobwebs of the so-called Aryan theory and all its vicious corollaries is therefore absolutely necessary, especially for the South, and a proper self-respect created by a knowledge of the past grandeur of one of the great ancestors of the Arya race—the great Tamilians.

We stick, in spite of Western theories, to that definition of the word "Arya," which we find in our sacred books, and which includes only the multitude we now call Hindus. This Arya race, itself a mixture of two great races, Sanskrit-speaking and Tamil-speaking, applies to all Hindus alike. That the Sudras have in some Smritis been excluded from this epithet means nothing, for the Sudras were and still are only the waiting Aryas—Aryas in novitiate.

Though we know Pandit Savariroyan is walking over rather insecure ground, though we differ from many of his sweeping explanations of Vedic names and races, yet we are glad that he has undertaken the task of beginning a proper investigation into the culture of the great mother of Indian civilisation—if the Sanskrit-speaking race was the father.

We are glad also, that he boldly pushes forward the Accado-Sumerian racial identity of the ancient Tamilians. And this makes us proud of the blood of the great civilisation which flowered before all others—compared to whose antiquity the Aryans and Semites are babies.

We would suggest also, that the land of Punt of the Egyptians was not only Malabar but that the Egyptians as a race bodily migrated from Malabar across the ocean and entered the delta along the course of the Nile from

north to south, to which Punt they have been always fondly looking back as the home of the blessed

This is a move in the right direction. Detailed and more careful work is sure to follow with a better study of the Tamilian tongues and the Tamilian elements found in the Sanskrit literature, philosophy and religion. And who are more competent to do this work than those who learn the Tamilian idioms as their mother-tongue?

As for us Vedântins and Sannyâsins, we are proud of our Sanskrit-speaking ancestors of the Vedas ; proud of our Tamil-speaking ancestors whose civilisation is the oldest yet known ; we are proud of our Kolarian ancestors older than either of the above—who lived and hunted in forests , we are proud of our ancestors with flint implements—the first of the human race ; and if evolution is true, we are proud of our animal ancestors, for they antedated man himself. We are proud that we are descendants of the whole universe, sentient or insentient. Proud that we are born, and work and suffer—prouder still that we die when the task is finished and enter for ever the realm where there is no more delusion.

---

## THE SOCIAL CONFERENCE ADDRESS

"God created the native, God created the European, but somebody else created the mixed breed,"—we heard a horribly blasphemous Englishman say

Before us lies the inaugural address of Mr Justice Ranade, voicing the reformatory zeal of the Indian Social Conference. In it there is a huge array of instances of inter-caste marriages of yore, a good deal about the liberal spirit of the ancient Kshatriyas, good sober advice to students, all expressed with an earnestness of goodwill and gentleness of language that is truly admirable

The last part, however, which offers advice as to the creation of a body of teachers for the new movement strong in the Punjab, which we take for granted is the Arya Samâj, founded by a Sannyâsin, leaves us wondering and asking ourselves the question

It seems God created the Brahman, God created the Kshatriya, but who created the Sannyasin?

There have been and are Sannyasins or monks in every known religion. There are Hindu monks, Buddhist monks, Christian monks, and even Islam had to yield its rigorous denial and take in whole orders of mendicant monks

There are the wholly shaved, the partly shaved, the long hair, short hair, matted hair, and various other hirsute types

There are the sky-clad, the rag-clad, the ochre-clad, the yellow-clad, the black-clad Christian, and the blue-clad Mussalman. Then, there have been those that tortured their flesh in various ways, and others who believed in keeping their bodies well and healthy. There was also, in old days in every country, the monk militant. The same spirit and similar manifestations have run in parallel lines

with the women, too—the nuns. Mr Ranade is not only the President of the Indian Social Conference but a chivalrous gentleman also. the nuns of the *Srutis* and *Smritis* seem to have been to his entire satisfaction. The ancient celibate *Brahmavâdinis*, who travelled from court to court challenging great philosophers, do not seem to him to thwart the central plan of the Creator—the propagation of species, nor did they seem to have lacked in the variety and completeness of human experience, in Mr Ranade's opinion, as the stronger sex following the same line of conduct, seem to have done

We therefore dismiss the ancient nuns and their modern spiritual descendants as having passed muster

The arch-offender, man alone, has to bear the brunt of Mr Ranade's criticism, and let us see whether he survives it or not

It seems to be the consensus of opinion amongst savants that this world-wide monastic institution had its first inception in this curious land of ours, which appears to stand so much in need of "social reform "

The married teacher and the celibate are both as old as the *Vedas*. Whether the Soma-sipping married *Rishi* with his "all-rounded" experience was the first in order of appearance, or the lack-human-experience celibate *Rishi* was the primeval form, is hard to decide just now. Possibly, Mr Ranade will solve the problem for us independently of the hearsay of the so-called Western Sanskrit scholars, till then, the question stands a riddle like the hen and egg problem of yore

But whatever be the order of genesis, the celibate teachers of the *Srutis* and *Smritis* stand on an entirely different platform from the married ones, which is perfect chastity, *Brahmacharya*

If the performance of *Yajnas* is the corner-stone of the work-portion of the *Vedas*, as surely is *Brahmacharya*, the foundation of the knowledge-portion

Why could not the blood-shedding sacrificers be the exponents of the Upanishads—why?

On the one side was the married Rishi, with his meaningless, bizarre, nay, terrible ceremonials, his misty sense of ethics, to say the least, on the other hand, the celibate monks tapping, in spite of their want of human experience, springs of spirituality and ethics at which the monastic Jinas, the Buddhas, down to Sankara, Râmânûja, Kabir and Chaitanya, drank deep, and acquired energy to propagate their marvellous spiritual and social reforms, and which reflected third-hand, fourth-hand from the West, is giving our social reformers the power even to criticise the Sannyasins.

At the present day, what support, what pay, do the mendicants receive in India, compared to the pay and privilege of our social reformers? And what work does the social reformer do, compared to the Sannyasin's silent selfless labour of love?

But they have not learnt the modern method of self-advertisement!!

The Hindu drank in with his mother's milk that this life is as nothing—a dream! In this, he is at one with the Westerners, but the Westerner sees no further and his conclusion is that of the Chârvâka—to “make hay while the sun shines” “This world being a miserable hole, let us enjoy to the utmost what morsels of pleasure are left to us” To the Hindu, on the other hand, God and soul are the only realities, infinitely more real than this world, and he is therefore ever ready to let this go, for the other

So long as this attitude of the national mind continues, and we pray it will continue for ever, what hope is there in our anglicised compatriots to check the impulse in Indian men and women to renounce all “for the good of the universe and for one's own freedom”

And that rotten corpse of an argument against the monk—used first by the Protestants in Europe, borrowed

by the Bengali reformers and now embraced by our Bombay brethren!—the monk on account of his celibacy must lack the realisation of life “in all its fullness and in all its varied experience”—we hope this time, the corpse will go for good into the Arabian Sea, especially in these days of plague, and notwithstanding the filial love one may suppose the foremost clan of Brahmans there may have for ancestors of great perfume, if the Paurânika accounts are of any value in tracing their ancestry

By the bye, in Europe, between the monks and nuns, they have brought up and educated most of the children, whose parents, though married people, were utterly unwilling to taste of the “varied experiences of life”

Then, of course, every faculty has been given to us by God for some use. Therefore the monk is wrong in not propagating the race—a sinner! Well, so also have been given us the faculties of anger, lust, cruelty, theft, robbery, cheating, etc., every one of these being absolutely necessary for the maintenance of social life, reformed or unreformed. What about these? Ought they also to be maintained at full steam, following the varied-experience-theory or not? Of course the social reformers being in intimate acquaintance with God Almighty and His purposes, must answer the query in the positive. Are we to follow Visvâmitra, Atri and others in their ferocity and the Vasiṣṭha family in particular in their “full and varied experience” with womankind? For the majority of married Rishis are as celebrated for their liberality in begetting children wherever and whenever they could, as for their hymn-singing and soma-bibbing, or are we to follow the celibate Rishis who upheld Brahmacharya as the *sine qua non* of spirituality?

Then, there are the usual backsliders, who ought to come in for a load of abuse—monks who could not keep up to their ideal—weak, wicked.

But if the ideal is straight and sound, a backsliding

monk is a head and shoulders above any householder in the land, on the principle, "It is better to have loved and lost "

Compared to the coward that never made the attempt, he is a hero

If the searchlight of scrutiny were turned on the inner workings of our social reform conclave, angels would have to take note of the percentage of backsliders as between the monk and the householder ; and the recording angel is in our own heart

But then, what about this marvellous experience of standing alone, discarding all help, breasting the storms of life, of working without any sense of recompense, without any sense of putrid duty ? Working a whole life, joyful, free—because not goaded on to work like slaves—by false human love or ambition ?

This the monk alone can have What about religion ? Has it to remain or vanish ? If it remains it requires its experts, its soldiers The monk is the religious expert, having made religion his one *métier* of life He is the soldier of God. What religion dies so long as it has a band of devoted monks ?

Why are Protestant England and America shaking before the onrush of the Catholic monk ?

*Vive* Ranade and the Social Reformers !—but, oh India ! Anglicised India ! Do not forget, child, that there are in this society problems that neither you nor your Western Guru can yet grasp the meaning of—much less solve !



# INDIA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

The following notes were discovered among Swami Vivekananda's papers. He intended to write a book and jotted down forty-two points as a syllabus for the work, but only a few points were dealt with as an introduction by him and the work was left unfinished. We give the manuscript as found.

## Syllabus

1. Bold has been my message to the people of the West. Bolder to those at home.

2 Four years of residence in the marvellous West has made India only the better understood. The shades are deeper and the lights brighter.\*

3 The survey—it is not true that the Indians have degenerated

4 The problem here has been as it has been everywhere else—the assimilation of various races, but nowhere has it been so vast as here.

5 Community of language, government and, above all, religion has been the power of fusion.

6. In other lands this has been attempted by "force," that is, the enforcement of the culture of one race only over the rest. The result being the production of a short-lived vigorous national life ; then, dissolution.

7. In India, on the other hand, the attempts have been as gentle as the problem vast, and from the earliest times, the customs, and especially the religions, of the different elements tolerated

8 Where it was a small problem and force was sufficient to form a unity, the effect really was the nipping in the bud of various healthy types in the germ of all the elements except the dominant one. It was only one set of

brains using the vast majority for its own good, thus losing the major portion of the possible amount of development, and thus when the dominant type had spent itself, the apparently impregnable building tottered to its ruins, e g , Greece, Rome, the Norman.

9 A common language would be a great desideratum, but the same criticism applies to it, the destruction of the vitality of the various existing ones

10 The only solution to be reached was the finding of a great sacred language of which all the others would be considered as manifestations, and that was found in the Sanskrit.

11. The Dravidian languages may or may not have been originally Sanskritic, but for practical purposes they are so now, and every day we see them approaching the ideal more and more, yet keeping their distinctive vital peculiarities

12 A racial background was found—the Aryas

13 The speculation whether there was a distinct, separate race called the Aryas living in Central Asia to the Baltic

14 The so-called types Races were always mixed

15. The “blonde” and the “brunette”

16 Coming to practical common sense from so-called historical imagination The Aryas in their oldest records were in the land between Turkistan and the Punjab and N W. Tibet

17. This leads to the attempt at fusion between races and tribes of various degrees of culture

18 Just as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the Arya the racial solution So the Brâhmanhood is the solution of the varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of all social and political problems

19 The great ideal of India—Brahmanhood

20. Property-less, selfless, subject to no law, no king except the moral

21 Brahmanhood by descent—various races have claimed and acquired the right in the past as well as in the present

22. No claim is made by the doer of great deeds, only by lazy worthless fools

23 Degradation of Brahmanhood and Kshatriyahood. The Purânas said there will be only non-Brahmanas in the Kali Yuga, and that is true, becoming truer every day Yet a few Brahmanas remain, and in India alone

24. Kshatriyahood—we must pass through that to become a Brahmana. Some may have passed through in the past, but the present must show that.

25 But the disclosure of the whole plan is to be found in religion

26. The different tribes of the same race worship similar gods, under a generic name as the Bels of the Babylonians, the Molochs of the Hebrews.

27. The attempt in Babylonia of making all the Bels merge in Bel-Merodach—the attempt of the Israelites to merge all the Molochs in the Moloch Yavah or Yahu

28 The Babylonians destroyed by the Persians, and the Hebrews who took the Babylonian mythology and adapted it to their own needs, succeeded in producing a strict monotheistic religion

29. Monotheism like absolute monarchy is quick in executing orders, and a great centralisation of force, but it grows no farther, and its worst feature is its cruelty and persecution All nations coming within its influence perish very soon after a flaring up of a few years

30 In India the same problem presented itself—the solution found—एक सद्धिमा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

This is the keynote to everything which has succeeded, and the keystone of the arch

31 The result is that wonderful toleration of the Vedântist

32 The great problem therefore is to harmonise and

unify without destroying the individuality of these various elements.

33 No form of religion which depends upon persons, either of this earth or even of heaven, is able to do that

34 Here is the glory of the Advaita system preaching a principle, not a person, yet allowing persons, both human and divine, to have their full play

35. This has been going on all the time, in this sense we have been always progressing. The Prophets during the Mohammedan rule

36 It was fully conscious and vigorous in old days, and less so of late; in this sense alone we have degenerated.

37 This is going to be in the future. If the manifestation of the power of one tribe utilising the labours of the rest produced wonderful results at least for a certain length of time, here is going to be the accumulation and the concentration of all the races that have been slowly and inevitably getting mixed up in blood and ideas, and in my mind's eye, I see the future giant slowly maturing. The future India, the youngest and the most glorious of the nations of earth as well as the oldest

38 The way—we will have to work. Social customs as barriers, some as founded upon the Smritis. But none from the Srutis. The Smritis must change with time. This is the admitted law

39 The principles of the Vedânta not only should be preached everywhere in India, but also outside. Our thought must enter into the make-up of the minds of every nation, not through writings, but through persons

40 Gift is the only Karma in Kali Yuga. None-attaining knowledge until purified by Karma

41 Gift of spiritual and secular knowledge

42 Renunciation—Renouncers—the national call

## INTRODUCTION

Bold has been my message to the people of the West, bolder is my message to you, my beloved countrymen. The message of ancient India to new Western nations I have tried my best to voice—ill done or well done the future is sure to show, but the mighty voice of the same future is already sending forward soft but distinct murmurs, gaining strength as the days go by, the message of India that is to be to India as she is at present

Many wonderful institutions and customs, and many wonderful manifestations of strength and power it has been my good fortune to study in the midst of the various races I have seen, but the most wonderful of all was to find that beneath all these apparent variations of manners and customs, of culture and power, beats the same mighty human heart under the impulsion of the same joys and sorrows, of the same weakness and strength

Good and evil are everywhere and the balance is wondrously even, but, above all, is the glorious soul of man everywhere which never fails to understand any one who knows how to speak its own language. Men and women are to be found in every race whose lives are blessings to humanity, verifying the words of the Divine Emperor Asoka—"In every land dwell Brâhmanas and Shramanas "

I am grateful to the lands of the West for the many warm hearts that received me with all the love that pure and disinterested souls alone could give, but my life's allegiance is to this my Motherland, and if I had a thousand lives, every moment of the whole series would be consecrated to your service, my countrymen, my friends.

For to this land I owe whatever I possess, physical, mental and spiritual, and if I have been successful in anything, the glory is yours, not mine. Mine alone are my weaknesses and failures, as they come through my in-

ability of profiting by the mighty lessons with which this land surrounds one, even from his very birth

And what a land! Whosoever stands on this sacred land, whether alien or a child of the soil, feels himself surrounded—unless his soul is degraded to the level of brute animals—by the living thoughts of the earth's best and purest sons, who have been working to raise the animal to the Divine through centuries, whose beginning history fails to trace. The very air is full of the pulsations of spirituality. This land is sacred to philosophy, to ethics and spirituality, to all that tends to give a respite to man in his incessant struggle for the preservation of the animal, to all training that makes man throw off the garment of brutality and stand revealed as the Spirit immortal, the birthless, the deathless, the ever-blessed—the land where the cup of pleasure was full, and fuller has been the cup of misery, until here, first of all, man found out that it was all vanity, here, first of all, in the prime of youth, in the lap of luxury, in the height of glory and plenitude of power, he broke through the fetters of delusion. Here, in this ocean of humanity, amidst the sharp interaction of strong currents of pleasure and pain, of strength and weakness, of wealth and poverty, of joy and sorrow, of smile and tear, of life and death, in the melting rhythm of eternal peace and calmness, arose the throne of renunciation! Here in this land, the great problems of life and death, of the thirst for life, and the vain mad struggles to preserve it only resulting in the accumulation of woes, were first grappled with and solved—solved—as they never were before and never will be hereafter, for here, and here alone was discovered that even life itself is an evil, the shadow only of something which alone is real. This is the land where alone religion was practical and real, and here alone men and women plunged boldly in to realise the goal, just as in other lands, they madly plunge in to realise the pleasures of life, by robbing their

weaker brethren Here, and here alone the human heart expanded till it included not only the human, but birds, beasts, and plants, from the highest gods to grains of sand, the highest and the lowest, all find a place in the heart of man, grown great, infinite And here alone, the human soul studied the universe as one unbroken unity whose every pulse was his own pulse

We all hear so much about the degradation of India There was a time when I also believed in it But to-day standing on the vantage-ground of experience, with eyes cleared of obstructive predispositions and above all, of the highly-coloured pictures of other countries toned down to their proper shade and light by actual contact, I confess, in all humility, that I was wrong Thou blessed land of the Aryas, thou wast never degraded Sceptres have been broken and thrown away, the ball of power has passed from hand to hand, but in India, courts and kings always touched only a few, the vast mass of the people, from the highest to the lowest, has been left to pursue its own inevitable course, the current of national life flowing at times slow and half-conscious, at others, strong and awakened I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps—my Motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God

Aye, a glorious destiny, my brethren, for as far back as the days of the Upanishads we have thrown the challenge to the world—न प्रजया न धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानयु। “Not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached” Race after race has taken the challenge up, and tried their utmost to solve the world-riddle on the plane of desires They have all failed in the past—the old ones have become extinct under the

weight of wickedness and misery, which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war, whether patience will survive or non-forbearance, whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether muscle will survive or brain, whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to it through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation.

This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being, the *raison d'être* of her very existence—the spiritualisation of the human race. In this her life-course she has never deviated, whether the Tartar ruled or the Turk, whether the Mogul ruled or the English.

And I challenge anybody to show one single period of her national life when India was lacking in spiritual giants, capable of moving the world. But her work is spiritual, and that cannot be done with blasts of war-trumpets or the march of cohorts. Her influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers of the earth. This influence being in its nature gentle, would have to wait for a fortunate combination of circumstances, to go out of the country into other lands, though it never ceased to work within the limits of its native land. As such, every educated person knows that whenever the empire-building Tartar or Persian or Greek or Arab brought this land in contact with the outside world, a mass of spiritual influence immediately flooded the world from here. The very same circumstances have presented themselves once more before us. The English high-roads over land and sea and the wonderful power manifested by the inhabitants of that little island have once more brought India in contact with the rest of the world, and



the same work has already begun. Mark my words, this is but the small beginning, big things are to follow ; what the result of the present work outside India will be I cannot exactly state, but this I know for certain, that millions, I say deliberately, millions in every civilised land are waiting for the message that will save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern money-worship is driving them headlong, and many of the leaders of the new social movements have already discovered that Vedanta in its highest form can alone spiritualise their social aspirations. I shall have to return to this towards the end. I take up therefore the other great subject, the work within the country.

The problem assumes a twofold aspect, not only spiritualisation but assimilation of the various elements of which the nation is composed. The assimilation of different races into one has been the common task in the life of every nation.

---

## STRAY REMARKS ON THEOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

The Theosophists are having a jubilee time of it this year, and several press-notices are before us of their goings and doings for the last twenty-five years

Nobody has a right now to say that the Hindus are not liberal to a fault. A coterie of young Hindus has been found to welcome even this graft of American Spiritualism, with its panoply of taps and raps and hitting back and forth with Mahâtmic pellets

The Theosophists claim to possess the Original Divine Knowledge of the Universe We are glad to learn of it, and gladder still that they mean to keep it rigorously a secret. Woe unto us, poor mortals, and Hindus at that, if all this is at once let out on us! Modern Theosophy is Mrs Besant Blavatskism and Olcottism seem to have taken a back seat Mrs Besant means well at least—and nobody can deny her perseverance and zeal

There are, of course, carping critics. We on our part see nothing but good in Theosophy—good in what is directly beneficial, good in what is pernicious, as they say, indirectly good as we say—the intimate geographical knowledge of various heavens, and other places, and the denizens thereof, and the dexterous finger work on the visible plane accompanying ghostly communications to live Theosophists—all told. For Theosophy is the best serum we know of, whose injection never fails to develop the queer moths finding lodgment in some brains attempting to pass muster as sound.

We have no wish to disparage the good work of the Theosophical or any other society Yet exaggeration has been in the past the bane of our race, and if the several

<sup>1</sup> Found among Swami Vivekananda's papers

articles on the work of the Theosophical Society that appeared in the *Advocate* of Lucknow be taken as the temperamental gauge of Lucknow, we are sorry for those it represents, to say the least, foolish depreciation is surely vicious, but fulsome praise is equally loathsome.

This Indian grafting of American Spiritualism—with only a few Sanskrit words taking the place of spiritualistic jargon—Mahâtmâ missiles taking the place of ghostly raps and taps, and Mahatmic inspiration that of obsession by ghosts

We cannot attribute a knowledge of all this to the writer of the articles in the *Advocate*, but he must not confound himself and his Theosophists with the great Hindu nation, the majority of whom have clearly seen through the Theosophical phenomena from the start and following the great Swami Dayânanda Saraswati, who took away his patronage from Blavatskism the moment he found it out, have held themselves aloof

Again, whatever be the predilection of the writer in question, the Hindus have enough of religious teaching and teachers amidst themselves even in this Kali-Yuga, and they do not stand in need of dead ghosts of Russians and Americans

The articles in question are libels on the Hindus and their religion. We Hindus—let the writer, like that of the articles referred to, know once for all—have no need nor desire to import religion from the West. Sufficient has been the degradation of importing almost everything else

The importation in the case of religion should be mostly on the side of the West, we are sure, and our work has been all along in that line. The only help the religion of the Hindus got from the Theosophists in the West was not a ready field, but years of up-hill work, necessitated by Theosophical sleight-of-hand methods. The writer ought to have known that the Theosophists wanted to crawl into the heart of Western Society, catching on to the skirts of

scholars like Max Muller and poets like Edwin Arnold, all the same denouncing these very men and posing as the only receptacles of Universal Wisdom And one heaves a sigh of relief that this wonderful wisdom is kept a secret Indian thought, charlatanry and mango-growing faquirism had all become identified in the minds of educated people in the West, and this was all the help rendered to Hindu religion by the Theosophists

The great immediate visible good effect of Theosophy in every country, so far as we can see, is to separate, like Prof Koch's injections into the lungs of consumptives, the healthy, spiritual, active and patriotic from the charlatans—the moribids and the degenerates posing as spiritual beings.

---

# REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MAHARAJA OF KHETRI

## INDIA—THE LAND OF RELIGION

During the residence of the Swamiji in America, the following Address from the Maharaja of Khetri (Rajputana), dated March 4th, 1895, was received by him.

My dear Swamiji,—As the head of this Durbar (a formal stately assemblage) held to-day for this special purpose, I have much pleasure in conveying to you, in my own name and that of my subjects, the heart-felt thanks of this State for your worthy representation of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago, in America.

I do not think the general principles of Hinduism could be expressed more accurately and clearly in English than what you have done, with all the restrictions imposed by the very natural shortcomings of language itself.

The influence of your speech and behaviour in foreign lands, has not only spread admiration among men of different countries and different religions, but has also served to familiarise you with them, to help in the furtherance of your unselfish cause. This is very highly and inexpressibly appreciated by us all, and we should feel to be failing in our duty, were I not to write to you formally at least these few lines, expressing our sincere gratitude for all the trouble you have taken in going to foreign countries, and to expound in the American Parliament of Religions the truths of our ancient religion, which we ever hold so dear. It is certainly applicable to the pride of India that it has been fortunate in possessing the privilege of having secured so able a representative as yourself.

Thanks are also due to those noble souls whose efforts succeeded in organising the Parliament of Religions, and

who accorded to you a very enthusiastic reception. As you were quite a foreigner in that continent, their kind treatment of you is due to their love of the several qualifications you possess, and this speaks highly of their noble nature.

I herewith enclose twenty printed copies of this letter, and have to request that, keeping this one with yourself, you will kindly distribute the other copies among your friends.

With best regards,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

RAJA AJITSING BAHADUR, OF KHETRI.

The Swamiji sent the following reply :

*"Whenever virtue subsides, and wickedness raises its head, I manifest Myself to restore the glory of religion"*—are the words, noble Prince, of the Eternal One, in the holy Gita, striking the keynote of the pulsating ebb and flow of the spiritual energy in the universe.

These changes are manifesting themselves again and again in rhythms peculiar to themselves, and like every other tremendous change, though affecting, more or less, every particle within their sphere of action, they show their effects more intensely upon those particles which are naturally susceptible to their power.

As in a universal sense, the primal state is a state of sameness of the qualitative forces—a disturbance of this equilibrium and all succeeding struggles to regain it, composing what we call the manifestation of nature, this universe, which state of things remains as long as the primitive sameness is not reached—so, in a restricted sense on our own earth, differentiation and its inevitable counterpart, this struggle towards homogeneity, must remain as long as the human race shall remain as such, creating strongly marked peculiarities between ethnic divisions, sub-

racés and even down to individuals in all parts of the world

In this world of impartial division and balance therefore, each nation represents, as it were, a wonderful dynamo for the storage and distribution of a particular species of energy, and amidst all other possessions that particular property shines forth as the special characteristic of that race. And as any upheaval in any particular part of human nature, though affecting others more or less, stirs to its very depth that nation of which it is a special characteristic, and from which as a centre it generally starts, so any commotion in the religious world is sure to produce momentous changes in India, that land which again and again has had to furnish the centre of the widespread religious upheavals, for, above all, India is the land of religion.

Each man calls that alone real which helps him to realise his ideal. To the worldly-minded, everything that can be converted into money is real, that which cannot be so converted is unreal. To the man of a domineering spirit, anything that will conduce to his ambition of ruling over his fellow-men is real—the rest is naught, and man finds nothing in that which does not echo back the heart-beats of his special love in life.

Those whose only aim is to barter the energies of life for gold, or name, or any other enjoyment, those to whom the tramp of embattled cohorts is the only manifestation of power, those to whom the enjoyments of the senses are the only bliss that life can give—to these, India will ever appear as an immense desert whose every blast is deadly to the development of life, as it is known by them.

But to those whose thirst for life has been quenched for ever by drinking from the stream of immortality that flows from far away beyond the world of the senses, whose souls have cast away, as a serpent, their scales, the three-fold bondages of lust, gold and fame, who, from their

height of calmness, look with love and complacence upon the petty quarrels and jealousies and fights for little gilded puff-balls, filled with dust, called "enjoyment" by those under a sense-bondage, to those whose accumulated force of past good deeds has caused the scales of ignorance to fall off from their eyes, making them see through the vanity of name and form—to such wheresoever they be, India, the motherland and eternal mine of spirituality, stands transfigured, a beacon of hope to every one in search of Him who is the only real Existence in a universe of vanishing shadows

The majority of mankind can only understand power when it is presented to them in a concrete form, fitted to their perceptions. To them, the rush and excitement of war, with its power and spell, is something very tangible, and any manifestation of life that does not come like a whirlwind, bearing down everything before it, is to them as death. And India, for centuries at the feet of foreign conquerors, without any idea or hope of resistance, without the least solidarity among its masses, without the least idea of patriotism, must needs appear to such, as a land of rotten bones, a lifeless putrescent mass

It is said—the fittest alone survive. How is it, then, that this most unfitted of all races, according to commonly accepted ideas, could bear the most awful misfortunes that ever befell a race, and yet not show the least signs of decay? How<sup>f</sup> is it that, while the multiplying powers of the so-called vigorous and active races are dwindling every day, the immoral (?) Hindu shows a power of increase beyond them all? Great laurels are due, no doubt, to those who can deluge the world with blood at a moment's notice, great indeed is the glory of those who, to keep up a population of a few millions in plenty, have to starve half the population of the earth, but is no credit due to those who can keep hundreds of millions in peace and plenty, without snatching the bread from



the mouth of any one else? Is there no power displayed in bringing up and guiding the destinies of countless millions of human beings, through hundreds of centuries, without the least violence to others?

The mythologies of all ancient races supply us with fables of heroes whose life was concentrated in a certain small portion of their bodies, and until that was touched they remained invulnerable. It seems as if each nation also has such a peculiar centre of life, and so long as that remains untouched, no amount of misery and misfortune can destroy it.

In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them.

Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor, and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life. It is out of this past that the future has to be moulded, this past will become the future.

The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of every one, is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions.

Every critical student knows that the social laws of India have always been subject to great periodic changes. At their inception, these laws were the embodiment of a gigantic plan, which was to unfold itself slowly through time. The great seers of ancient India saw so far ahead of their time that the world has to wait centuries

yet to appreciate their wisdom, and it is this very inability, on the part of their own<sup>d</sup> descendants, to appreciate the full scope of this wonderful plan, that is the one and only cause of the degeneration of India

Ancient India had for centuries been the battle-field for the ambitious projects of two of her foremost classes—the Brâhmans and the Kshatriyas

On the one hand, the priesthood stood between the lawless social tyranny of the Princes over the masses, whom the Kshatriyas declared to be their legal food. On the other hand, the Kshatriya power was the one potent force which struggled with any success against the spiritual tyranny of the priesthood, and the ever-increasing change of ceremonials, which they were forging to bind down the people with

The tug of war began in the earliest periods of the history of our race, and throughout the *Srutis* it can be distinctly traced. A momentary lull came when *Sri Krishna*, leading the faction of Kshatriya power and of *Jnânâ*, showed the way to reconciliation. The result was the teachings of the *Gita*—the essence of philosophy, of liberality, of religion. Yet the causes were there, and the effect must follow

The ambition of these two classes to be the masters of the poor and ignorant was there, and the strife once more became fierce. The meagre literature that has come down to us from that period brings to us but faint echoes of that mighty past strife, but at last it broke out as a victory for the Kshatriyas, a victory for *Jnânâ*, for liberty—and ceremonial had to go down, much of it for ever. This upheaval was what is known as the Buddhistic reformation. On the religious side, it represented freedom from ceremonial, on the political side, overthrowal of the priesthood by the Kshatriyas

It is a significant fact that the two greatest men

ancient India produced, were both Kshatriyas—Krishna and Buddha—and still more significant is the fact that both of these God-men threw open the door of knowledge to every one, irrespective of birth or sex.

In spite of its wonderful moral strength, Buddhism was extremely iconoclastic—and much of its force being spent in merely negative attempts, it had to die out in the land of its birth, and what remained of it became full of superstitions and ceremonials, a hundred times cruder than those it was intended to suppress. Although it partially succeeded in putting down the animal sacrifices of the Vedas, it filled the land with temples, images, symbols, and bones of saints.

Above all, in the medley of Aryans, Mongols and aborigines which it created, it unconsciously led the way to some of the hideous Vâmâchâras. This was especially the reason why this travesty of the teaching of the great Master had to be driven out of India by Sri Sankara and his band of Sannyâsins.

Thus, even the current of life, set in motion by the greatest soul that ever wore a human form, the Bhagavân Buddha himself, became a miasmatic pool, and India had to wait for centuries until Sankara arose, followed in quick succession by Râmânuja and Madhva.

By this time, an entirely new chapter had opened in the history of India. The ancient Kshatriyas and the Brahmans had disappeared. The land between the Himalayas and the Vindhya, the home of the Aryas, the land which gave birth to Krishna and Buddha, the cradle of great Râjarshis and Brahmarshis, became silent, and from the very further end of the Indian Peninsula, from races alien in speech and form, from families claiming descent from the ancient Brahmans, came the reaction against the corrupted Buddhism.

What had become of the Brahmans and Kshatriyas of Aryavarta? They had entirely disappeared, except here

and there a few mongrel clans claiming to be Brahmans and Kshatriyas, and in spite of their inflated, self-laudatory assertions, that the whole world ought to learn from एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादयजन्तः, they had to sit in sackcloth and ashes, in all humility, to learn at the feet of the Southerners. The result was the bringing back of the Vedas to India—a revival of Vedânta, such as India never before had seen, even the householders began to study the Aranyakas.

In the Buddhistic movement, the Kshatriyas were the real leaders, and whole masses of them became Buddhists. In the zeal of reform and conversion, the popular dialects had been almost exclusively cultivated, to the neglect of Sanskrit, and the larger portion of Kshatriyas had become disjointed from the Vedic literature and Sanskrit learning. Thus this wave of reform, which came from the South, benefited to a certain extent the priesthood, and the priests only. For the rest of India's millions, it forged more chains than they had ever known before.

The Kshatriyas have always been the backbone of India, so also they had been the supporters of science and liberty, and their voices had rung out again and again to clear the land from superstitions, and throughout the history of India they ever formed the invulnerable barrier to aggressive priestly tyranny.

When the greater part of their number sank into ignorance, and another portion mixed their blood with savages from Central Asia and lent their swords to establish the rules of priests in India, her cup became full to the brim, and down sank the land of Bharata, not to rise again, until the Kshatriya rouses himself, and making himself free, strikes the chains from the feet of the rest. Priestcraft is the bane of India. Can man degrade his brother, and himself escape degradation?

Know, Rajaji, the greatest of all truths, discovered by your ancestors, is that the universe is one. Can one

injure any one without injuring himself? The mass of Brahman and Kshatriya tyranny has recoiled upon their own heads with compound interest, and a thousand years of slavery and degradation is what the inexorable law of Karma is visiting upon them

This is what one of your ancestors said—"Even in this life, they have conquered relativity, whose mind is fixed in sameness"—one who is believed to be God incarnate. We all believe it. Are his words then vain, and without meaning? If not, and we know they are not, any attempt against this perfect equality of all creation, irrespective of birth, sex, or even qualification, is a terrible mistake, and no one can be saved until he has attained to this idea of sameness

Follow, therefore, noble Prince, the teachings of the Vedanta, not as explained by this or that commentator, but as the Lord within you understands them. Above all, follow this great doctrine of sameness in all things, through all beings, seeing the same God in all

This is the way to freedom, inequality, the way to bondage. No man and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality

Ignorance, inequality, and desire, are the three causes of human misery, and each follows the other in inevitable union. Why should a man think himself above any other man, or even an animal? It is the same throughout

त्वम् स्त्री त्वम् पुमानसि त्वम् कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।

"Thou art the man, thou the woman, thou art the young man, thou the young woman"

Many will say, "That is all right for the Sannyasins, but we are householders." No doubt, a householder having many other duties to perform, cannot as fully attain to this sameness; yet this should be also their ideal, for it is the ideal of all societies, of all mankind, all

animals, and all nature, to attain to this sameness. But alas! they think inequality is the way to attain equality, as if they could come to right by doing wrong!

This is the bane of human nature, the curse upon mankind, the root of all misery—this inequality. This is the source of all bondage, physical, mental, and spiritual

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्तात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

“Since seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere, he injures not Self by self, and so goes to the Highest Goal” This one saying contains, in a few words, the universal way to salvation

You, Rajputs, have been the glories of ancient India. With your degradation came national decay, and India can only be raised if the descendants of the Kshatriyas co-operate with the descendants of the Brahmans, not to share the spoils of pelf and power, but to help the weak, to enlighten the ignorant, and to restore the lost glory of the holy land of their forefathers.

And who can say but that the time is propitious? Once more the wheel is turning up, once more vibrations have been set in motion from India, which are destined at no distant day to reach the farthest limits of the earth. One voice has spoken, whose echoes are rolling on and gathering strength every day, a voice even mightier than those which have preceded it, for it is the summation of them all. Once more the voice that spoke to the sages on the banks of the Sarasvatī, the voice whose echoes reverberated from peak to peak of the “Father of Mountains,” and descended upon the plains through Krishna, Buddha, and Chaitanya, in all-carrying floods, has spoken again. Once more the doors have opened. Enter ye into the realms of light, the gates have been opened wide once more.

And you, my beloved Prince—you the scion of a race

who are the living pillars upon which rests the religion eternal, its sworn defenders and helpers, the descendants of Râma and Krishna, will you remain outside? I know, this cannot be. Yours, I am sure, will be the first hand that will be stretched forth to help religion once more. And when I think of you, Raja Ajit Singh, one in whom the well-known scientific attainments of your house have been joined to a purity of character of which a saint ought to be proud, to an unbounded love for humanity, I cannot help believing in the glorious renaissance of the religion eternal, when such hands are willing to rebuild it again.

May the blessings of Ramakrishna be on you and yours for ever and ever, and that you may live long for the good of many, and for the spread of truth is the constant prayer of—

VIVEKANANDA

---

## REPLY TO THE MADRAS ADDRESS<sup>1</sup>

FRIENDS, FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN AND CO-RELIGIONISTS OF  
MADRAS,—

It is most gratifying to me to find that my insignificant service to the cause of our religion has been acceptable to you, not because it is as a personal appreciation of me and my work in a foreign and distant land, but as a sure sign, though whirlwind after whirlwind of foreign invasion has passed over the devoted head of India, though centuries of neglect on our part, and contempt on the part of our conquerors, have visibly dimmed the glories of ancient Aryavarta, though many a stately column on which it rested, many a beautiful arch and many a marvellous corner, have been washed away by the inundations that deluged the land for centuries—the centre is all sound, the key-stone is unimpaired. The spiritual foundation upon which the marvellous monument of glory to God and charity to all beings has been reared, stands unshaken, strong as ever. Your generous appreciation of Him whose message to India and to the whole world, I, the most unworthy of His servants, had the privilege to bear, your innate spiritual instinct which saw in Him and His message the first murmurs of that tidal wave of spirituality which is destined at no distant future to break upon India in all its irresistible powers, carrying away in its omnipotent flood all that is weak and defective, and raising the Hindu race to the platform it is destined to occupy in the providence of God, crowned with more glory than it ever had even in the past, the reward of centuries of silent suffering, and

<sup>1</sup> When the success of the Swami in America became well known in India, several meetings were held and addresses of thanks and congratulations were forwarded to him. The first reply which he wrote was that to the Address of the Hindus of Madras



fulfilling its mission amongst the races of the world—the evolution of spiritual humanity

The people of Northern India are especially grateful to you of the South, as the great source to which most of the impulses that are working in India to-day can be traced. The great Bhâshyakâras, epoch-making Achâryas, Sankara, Râmânûja, and Madhva were born in Southern India. Great Sankara to whom every Advâitavâdin in the world owes allegiance, great Ramanuja whose heavenly touch converted the down-trodden pariahs into Alvars, great Madhva whose leadership was recognised even by the followers of the only Northern Prophet whose power has been felt all over the length and breadth of India—Sri Krishna Chaitanya. Even at the present day it is the South that carries the palm in the glories of Benares—your renunciation controls the sacred shrines on the farthest peaks of the Himalayas, and what wonder that with the blood of Prophets running in your veins, with your lives blessed by such Acharyas, you are the first and foremost to appreciate and hold on to the message of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

The South had been the repository of Vedic learning, and you will understand me when I state that, in spite of the reiterated assertions of aggressive ignorance, it is the Sruti still that is the backbone of all the different divisions of the Hindu religion.

However great may be the merits of the Samhita and the Brâhmana portions of the Vedas to the ethnologists or the philologists, however desirable may be the results that the अग्निमीले<sup>1</sup> or इषेलीजेत्वा<sup>2</sup> or शन्नोदेवीगभीष्टये<sup>3</sup> in conjunction

<sup>1</sup> ओ अग्निमीले पुरोहित यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् । होतार रवधातमम् ॥ ऋग्वेद । १ । १ । १ ।

<sup>2</sup> ओ इषेलीजेत्वा वायवः स्थोपायवः स्थ देवो वः सविता प्रार्पयतु श्रेष्ठतमाया कर्मणे । यजुर्वेद । १ । १ । १ ।

<sup>3</sup> ओ शन्नो देवीगभीष्टये आपो भवन्तु पीतये शयीरमिश्रवन्तु नः । अथर्ववेद । १ । १ । १ ।

with the different Vedis and sacrifices and libations produce—it was all in the way of Bhoga , and no one ever contended that it could produce Moksha As such, the Jnâna Kândam, the Aranyakas, the Srutis *par excellence* which teach the way to spirituality, the Moksha Mârga, have always ruled, and will always rule in India

Lost in the mazes and divisions of the “Religion Eternal,” by prepossession and prejudice unable to grasp the meaning of the only religion whose universal adaptation is the exact shadow of the अक्षोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्<sup>1</sup> God it preaches, groping in the dark, with a standard of spiritual truth borrowed second-hand from nations who never knew anything but rank materialism, the modern young Hindu struggles in vain to understand the religion of his forefathers, and gives up the quest altogether, and becomes a hopeless wreck of an agnostic, or else, unable to vegetate on account of the promptings of his innate religious nature, drinks carelessly of some of those different decoctions of Western materialism with an Eastern flavour, and thus fulfils the prophecy of the Sruti,—

परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथाम्बा ।

“Fools go staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind ”

They alone escape whose spiritual nature has been touched and vivified by the life-giving touch of the “Sadguru ”

Well has it been said by Bhagavan Bhashyakara .

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतत् देवानुग्रहेतुकम् ।

मनुष्यत्वं सुमुच्यते महापुरुषसंश्रय ॥

“These three are difficult to obtain in this world, and depend on the mercy of the gods—the human birth, the desire for salvation, and the company of the great-souled ones ”

<sup>1</sup> Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest

Either in the sharp analysis of the Vaisesikas, resulting in the wonderful theories about the Paramânuś Dvyanus, and Trasarenuś<sup>1</sup> or the still more wonderful analysis displayed in the discussions of the Jâtî, Dravya, Guna, Samavâya,<sup>2</sup> and to the various categories of the Naiyâyikas, rising to the solemn march of the thought of the Sâmkhyas, the fathers of the theories of evolution, ending with the ripe fruit, the result of all these researches, the Sutras of Vyâsa—the one background to all these different analyses and syntheses of the human mind, is still the Srutis. Even in the philosophical writings of the Buddhists or Jains, the help of Srutis is never rejected, and at least in some of the Buddhistic schools, and in the majority of the Jain writings, the authority of the Srutis is fully admitted, excepting what they call the Himsaka Srutis, which they hold to be interpolations of the Brahmans. In recent times, such a view has been held by the late great Swami Dayânanda Sarasvatî.

If one be asked to point out the system of thought towards which as a centre all the ancient and modern Indian thoughts have converged, if one wants to see the real backbone of Hinduism in all its various manifestations, the Sutras of Vyasa will unquestionably be pointed out as constituting all that.

Either one hears the Advaita-Kesari roaring in peals of thunder—the Astî, Bhâtî and Priya<sup>3</sup> amidst the heart-stopping solemnities of the Himalayan forests, mixing with the solemn cadence of the river of heaven, or listens to the cooing of the Piyâ, Pitam in the beautiful bowers of the grove of Vrindâ, either one mingles with the sedate

<sup>1</sup> Atoms, Entities composed of two atoms, Entities composed of three atoms

<sup>2</sup> Genus, Substance, Quality, Inhesion or inseparability

<sup>3</sup> Exists (Sat), Shines (Chit) Is beloved (Anandam)—the three predicatives of Brahman

meditations of the monasteries of Benares, or the ecstatic dances of the followers of the Prophet of Nadiya, whether one sits at the feet of the teacher of the Visishtâdvaïta system with its Vadakale, Tenkale,<sup>1</sup> and all the other subdivisions, or listens with reverence to the Acharyas of the Madhva school, whether one hears the martial "Wa Gurukî Fateh"<sup>2</sup> of the secular Sikhs, or the sermons on the Grantha Sahib of the Udâsis and Nirmalâs, whether he salutes the Sannyâsî disciples of Kabîr with "Sat Sâhib," and listens with joy to the Sâkhis (Bhajans); whether he pores upon the wonderful lore of that reformer of Rajputana, Dâdu, or the works of his royal disciple, Sundardâs, down to the great Nishchaldâs, the celebrated author of Vichâr-Sâgar—which book has more influence in India than any that has been written in any language within the last three centuries, if even one asks the Bhangî Mehtar of Northern India to sit down and give an account of the teachings of his Lâlguru—he will find that all these various teachers and schools have as their basis that system, whose authority is the Sruti, Gita its divine commentary, the Sâmraka Sutras its organised system, and all the different sects in India, from the Paramahansa Parivrâjakâchâryas to the poor despised Mehtar disciples of Lalguru, are different manifestations.

These three Prasthânas,<sup>3</sup> then, in their different explanations as Dvaïta, Visishtadvaita, or Advaita with a few minor recensions form the "authorities" of the Hindu religion. The Puranas, the modern representations of the ancient Nârâsamsî (Samhita portion of the Vedas), supply the mythology, and the Tantras, the modern representations of the Brâhmanas (ritual portion of the

<sup>1</sup> The two divisions of the Râmanuja sect

<sup>2</sup> Victory to the Guru

<sup>3</sup> Viz the Upanishad (Sruti), the Gita and the Smârta Sutras

Vedas), supply the ritual. Thus the three Prasthanas, as authorities, are common to all the sects, but as to the Purânas and Tantras, each sect has its own.

The Tantras, as we have said, represent the Vedic rituals, in a modified form, and before any one jumps into the most absurd conclusions about them, I will advise him to read the Tantras in conjunction with the Brahmanas, especially the Adhvaryu portion. And most of the Mantras, used in the Tantras, will be found taken *verbatim* from their Brahmanas. As to their influence, apart from the Srauta and Smârta rituals, all the forms of the rituals in vogue from the Himalayas to the Comorin have been taken from the Tantras, and they direct the worship of the Sâkta or Saiva or Vaishnava and all the others alike.

Of course, I do not pretend that all the Hindus are thoroughly acquainted with these sources of their religion. Many, especially in Lower Bengal, have not heard of the names of these sects and these great systems, but consciously or unconsciously, it is the plan laid down in the three Prasthanas, that they are all working out.

Wherever, on the other hand, the Hindi language is spoken, even the lowest classes have more knowledge of the Vedantic religion than many of the highest in Lower Bengal.

And why so?

Transported from the soil of Mithilâ to Navadvîpa, nurtured and developed by the fostering genius of Sîromani, Gadâdhar, Jagadîs, and a host of other great names, an analysis of the laws of reasoning, in some points superior to every other system in the whole world, expressed in a wonderful and precise mosaic of language, stands the Nyâya of Bengal, respected and studied throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan. But, alas, the Vedic study was sadly neglected, and until within the last few years, scarcely any one could be found in

Bengal to teach the Mahâ-Bhâshya of Patanjali. Once only a mighty genius rose above the never-ending Avachchhinnas and Avachchhedakas,<sup>1</sup>—Bhagavan Sri Krishna Chaitanya. For once the religious lethargy of Bengal was shaken, and for a time it entered into a communion with the religious life of other parts of India.

It is curious to note that though Sri Chaitanya obtained his Sannyas from a Bhârati, and as such was a Bharati himself, it was through Mâdhavendra Puri that his religious genius was first awakened.

The Puris seem to have a peculiar mission in rousing the spirituality of Bengal. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna got his Sannyâsâsrama from Totâ Puri.

The commentary that Sri Chaitanya wrote on the Vyâsa Sûtras has either been lost or not found yet. His disciples joined themselves to the Madhvas of the South, and gradually the mantles of such giants as Rupa and Sanâtana and Jiva Goswami, fell on the shoulders of Bâbâjis, and the great movement of Sri Chaitanya was decaying fast, till of late years there is a sign of revival. Hope that it will regain its lost splendour.

The influence of Sri Chaitanya is all over India. Wherever the Bhakti Marga is known, there is he appreciated, studied and worshipped. I have every reason to believe that the whole of the Vallabhâchârya recension is only a branch of the sect founded by Sri Chaitanya. But most of his so-called disciples in Bengal do not know how his power is still working all over India, and how can they? The disciples have become Gadians, while he was preaching barefooted from door to door in India, begging Achandâlas (all down to the lowest) to love God.

The curious and unorthodox custom of hereditary Gurus that prevails in Bengal, and for the most part in

<sup>1</sup> In Nyaya, 'Determined,' and 'determining attribute.'

Bengal alone, is another cause of its being cut off from the religious life of the rest of India.

The greatest cause of all is that the life of Bengal never received an influx from that of the great brotherhood of Sannyasins, who are the representatives and repositories of the highest Indian spiritual culture, even at the present day

Tyâga (renunciation) is never liked by the higher classes of Bengal. Their tendency is for Bhoga (enjoyment). How can they get a deep insight into spiritual things? त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमाप्नुयुः "By renunciation alone immortality is reached." How can it be otherwise?

On the other hand, throughout the Hindi-speaking world, a succession of brilliant Tyâgi teachers of far-reaching influence has brought the doctrines of the Vedanta to every door. Especially the impetus given to Tyaga during the reign of Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, has made the highest teachings of the Vedantic philosophy available for the very lowest of the low. With true pride, the Punjabi peasant girl says that even her spinning wheel repeats: "Soham," "Soham." And I have seen Mehtar Tyagis in the forest of Hrishikesh, wearing the garb of the Sannyasin, studying the Vedantas. And many a proud high-class man would be glad to sit at their feet and learn. And why not? अज्ञादपि परं धर्मे—"Supreme knowledge (can be learnt) even from the man of low birth."

Thus it is that the North-West and the Punjab have a religious education which is far ahead of that of Bengal, Bombay or Madras. The ever-travelling Tyagis of the various orders, Dashanâmîs or Vairâgis or Panthis bring religion to everybody's door, and the cost is only a bit of bread. And how noble and disinterested most of them are! There is one Sannyasin belonging to the Kachu Panthis, or independents, (who do not identify themselves with any sect), who has been instrumental in the establishing of hundreds of schools and charitable asylums all

over Rajputana. He has opened hospitals in forests, and thrown iron bridges over the gorges in the Himalayas, and this man never touches a coin with his hands, has no earthly possession except a blanket, which has given him the nickname of the "Blanket Swami," and begs his bread from door to door. I have never known him taking a whole dinner from one house, lest it should be a tax on the householder. And he is only one amongst many. Do you think that so long as these Gods on earth live in India, and protect the "Religion Eternal" with the impenetrable rampart of such godly characters, the old religion will die?

In this country,<sup>1</sup> the clergymen sometimes receive as high salaries as rupees thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand, even ninety thousand a year, for preaching two hours on Sunday only, and that only six months in a year. Look at the millions upon millions they spend for the support of their religion, and young Bengal has been taught that these Godlike, absolutely unselfish men like Kamblī-Swami are idle vagabonds. मङ्गलानाञ्च वै भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः। "Those who are devoted to My worshippers are regarded as the best of devotees."

Take even an extreme case, that of an extremely ignorant Vairagi. Even he, when he goes into a village, tries his best to impart to the villagers whatever he knows, from "Tulsidās" or "Chaitanya Charitāmṛitam" or "the Alwars" in Southern India. Is that not doing some good? And all this for only a bit of bread and a rag of cloth. Before unmercifully criticising them, think how much you do, my brother, for your poor fellow-countrymen, at whose expense you have got your education, and by grinding whose face you maintain your position and pay your teachers, for teaching you that the Babajis are only vagabonds.



A few of your fellow-countrymen in Bengal have criticised what they call—a new development of Hinduism. And well they may. For Hinduism is only just now penetrating into Bengal, where so long the whole idea of religion was a bundle of *Deshâchâras* (local customs) as to eating and drinking and marriage.

This short paper has not space for the discussion of such a big subject as to whether the view of Hinduism, which the disciples of Ramakrishna have been preaching all over India, was according to the “*Sat Shâstras*” or not. But I will give a few hints to our critics, which may help them in understanding our position better.

In the first place, I never contended that a correct idea of Hinduism can be gathered from the writings of Kâsidas or Krittivas, though their words are “*Amrita Samân*” (like nectar), and those that hear them are “*Punyavâns*” (virtuous). But we must go to Vedic and Dârśanika authorities, and to the great Acharyas and their disciples all over India.

If, brethren, you begin with the *Sutras* of Gautama, and read his theories about the “*Aptas*” (inspired), in the light of the commentaries of Vâtsyâyana, and go up to the *Mimânsakas* with Sabara and other commentators, and find out what they say about the *अलौकिकप्रत्यक्षम्* (super-sensuous realisation), and who are “*Aptas*,” and whether every being can become an “*Apta*,” or not, and that the proof of the Vedas is in their being the words of such “*Aptas* ;” if you have time to look into the introduction of Mahidhara to the *Yajurveda*, you will find a still more lucid discussion as to the Vedas being laws of the inner life of man, and as such they are eternal.

As to the eternity of Creation—this doctrine is the corner-stone not only of the Hindu religion, but of the Buddhists and Jains also.

Now all the sects in India can be grouped roughly as following the *Jnâna-Mârga* or the *Bhakti-Marga*. If you

will kindly look into the Introduction to the Sariraka Bhashyam of Sri Sankarâchârya, you will find there the Nirapekshatâ (transcendence) of Jnanam is thoroughly discussed, and the conclusion is that realisation of Brahman and the attainment of Moksha does not depend upon ceremonial, creed, caste, colour, or doctrine. It will come to any being who has the four Sâdhanâs, which are the most perfect moral culture.

As to the Bhaktas, even Bengali critics know very well that some of their authorities even declared that caste or nationality or sex, or, as to that, even the human birth, was never necessary to Moksha. Bhakti is the one only thing necessary.

Both Jnana and Bhakti are everywhere preached to be unconditioned, and as such there is not one authority who lays down the conditions of caste or creed or nationality in attaining Moksha. See the discussion on the Sutra of Vyasa—"अन्तरा चापि तु तद्वदृष्टेः"<sup>1</sup> by Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva.

Go through all the Upanishads, and even in the Samhitas, nowhere you will find the limited ideas of Moksha, which every other religion has. As to toleration, it is everywhere, even in the Samhita of the Adhvaryu Veda, in the third or fourth verse of the fortieth chapter, if my memory does not fail, it begins with न बुद्धिमेद जनयेदज्ञाना कर्मसंनिनाम्<sup>2</sup>. This is running through every-

<sup>1</sup> "But also (persons standing) between (are qualified for knowledge), for that is seen (in Scripture)."—III iv. 36. A person even if he does not belong to an Ashrama (possessing not the means to entitle him to one or other of the Ashramas) and thus stands between, as it were, is qualified for the knowledge of Brahman; for we meet scriptural passages declaring that persons of such a class possessed the knowledge of Brahman. *Vide* Chhand. Upa IV. I, Bri Upa III vi & viii.

<sup>2</sup> "(The wise one) should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant, attached to action." The line also occurs in the Gita.

where. Was anybody persecuted in India for choosing his *Ishta Devatâ*, or becoming an atheist or agnostic even, so long as he obeyed the social regulations? Society may punish anybody by its disapprobation for breaking any of its regulations, but no man, the lowest *Patita*, is ever shut out from *Moksha*. You must not mix up the two together. As to that, in Malabar a *Chandâla* is not allowed to pass through the same street as a high-caste man, but let him become a Mohammedan or Christian, he will be immediately allowed to go anywhere, and this rule has prevailed in the dominion of a Hindu sovereign for centuries. It may be queer, but it shows the idea of toleration for other religions, even in the most untoward circumstances.

The one idea the Hindu religions differ in from every other in the world, the one idea to express which the sages almost exhaust the vocabulary of the Sanskrit language, is that man must realise God, even in this life. And the Advaita texts very logically add, "To know God is to become God."

And here comes as a necessary consequence the broadest and most glorious idea of inspiration—not only as asserted and declared by the *Rishis* of the Vedas, not only by *Vidura* and *Dharmavyâdha* and a number of others, but even the other day *Nischaladas*, a *Tyagi* of the *Dadu-panthi* sect, boldly declared in his *Vichar-Sagar* "He who has known Brahman has become Brahman. His words are Vedas, and they will expel the darkness of ignorance, either expressed in Sanskrit or any popular dialect."

Thus to realise God, the Brahman, as the *Dvaitis* say, or to become Brahman, as the *Advaitis* say—is the aim and end of the whole teachings of the Vedas, and every other teaching therein contained, represents a stage in the course of our progress thereto. And the great glory of *Bhagavan Bhashyakara Sankaracharya* is that it was his

genius that gave the most wonderful expression to the ideas of Vyasa.

As absolute, Brahman alone is true, as relative truth, all the different sects, standing upon different manifestations of the same Brahman, either in India or elsewhere, are true. Only some are higher than others. Suppose a man starts straight towards the sun. At every step of his journey, he will see newer and newer visions of the sun—the size, the view and light will every moment be new, until he reaches the real sun. He saw the sun at first like a big ball; and then it began to increase in size. The sun was never small like the ball he saw; nor was it ever like all the succession of suns he saw in his journey. Still is it not true that our traveller always saw the sun, and nothing but the sun? Similarly, all these various sects are true—some nearer, some further off from the real Sun—which is our एकमेवाद्वितीयम्—One without a second.

And as the Vedas are the only Scriptures which teach this real absolute God, of which all other ideas of God are but minimised and limited visions; as the सर्वलोकहितैषिणी<sup>1</sup> Sruti takes the devotee gently by the hand, and leads him from one stage to another, through all the stages that are necessary for him to travel to reach the Absolute, and as all other religions represent one or other of these stages in an unprogressive and crystallised form, all the other religions of the world are included in the nameless, limitless, eternal Vedic religion.

Work hundreds of lives out, search every corner of your mind for ages—and still you will not find one noble religious idea that is not already imbedded in that infinite mine of spirituality.

As to the so-called Hindu idolatry—first go and learn the forms they are going through, and where is it that the worshippers are really worshipping—whether in the

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the well-wisher to all the world.

temple, in the image, or in the temple of their own bodies. First know for certain what they are doing—which more than ninety per cent. of the revilers are thoroughly ignorant of—and then it will explain itself in the light of the Vedantic philosophy.

Still these Karmas are not compulsory. On the other hand, open your *Manu*, and see where it orders every old man to embrace the fourth Ashrama, and whether he embraces it or not, he must give up all Karma. It is reiterated everywhere that all these Karmas ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते—finally end in Jnana.

As to the matter of that, a Hindu peasant has more religious education than many a gentleman in other countries. A friend criticised the use of European terms of philosophy and religion in my addresses. I would have been very glad to use Sanskrit terms; it would have been much more easy, as being the only perfect vehicle of religious thought. But the friend forgot that I was addressing an audience of Western people; and although a certain Indian missionary declared that the Hindus had forgotten the meaning of their Sanskrit books, and that it was the missionaries who unearthed the meaning, I could not find one in that large concourse of missionaries who could understand a line in Sanskrit—and yet some of them read learned papers criticising the Vedas, and all the sacred sources of the Hindu religion!

It is not true that I am against any religion. It is equally untrue that I am hostile to the Christian missionaries in India. But I protest against certain of their methods of raising money in America. What is meant by those pictures in the school-books for children where the Hindu mother is painted as throwing her children to the crocodiles in the Ganges? The mother is black, but the baby is painted white, to arouse more sympathy, and get more money. What is meant by those pictures which paint a man burning his wife at a stake with his own

hands, so that she may become a ghost, and torment the husband's enemy? What is meant by the pictures of huge cars crushing over human beings? The other day a book was published for children in this country, where one of these gentlemen tells a narrative of his visit to Calcutta. He says he saw a car running over fanatics in the streets of Calcutta. I have heard one of these gentlemen preach in Memphis that, in every village of India, there is a pond full of the bones of little babies.

What have the Hindus done to these disciples of Christ that every Christian child is taught to call the Hindus "vile" and "wretches," and the most horrible devils on earth? Part of the Sunday School education for children here consists in teaching them to hate everybody who is not a Christian, and the Hindus especially, so that, from their very childhood, they may subscribe their pennies to the missions. If not for truth's sake, for the sake of the morality of their own children, the Christian missionaries ought not to allow such things going on. Is it any wonder that such children grow up to be ruthless and cruel men and women? The greater a preacher can paint the tortures of eternal hell—the fire that is burning there,—the brimstone—the higher is his position among the orthodox. A servant-girl in the employ of a friend of mine, had to be sent to a lunatic asylum as a result of her attending what they call here the revivalist-preaching. The dose of hell-fire and brimstone was too much for her. Look again at the books published in Madras against the Hindu religion. If a Hindu writes one such line against the Christian religion, the missionaries will cry fire and vengeance.

My countrymen, I have been more than a year in this country. I have seen almost every corner of the society, and, after comparing notes, let me tell you that neither are we "devils," as the missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they "angels," as they claim to be. The less the

missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide, and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them. There may be actual pictures of some countries before which all the imaginary missionary pictures of the Hindu society will fade away into light. But my mission in life is not to be a paid reviler. I will be the last man to claim perfection for the Hindu society. No man is more conscious of the defects that are therein, or the evils that have grown up under centuries of misfortunes. If, foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, god-speed to you. But if by abuses incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.

In India religion was never shackled. No man was ever challenged in the selection of his "Ishta Devatâ," or his sect, or his preceptor, and religion grew, as it grew nowhere else. On the other hand, a fixed point was necessary to allow this infinite variation to religion, and society was chosen as that point in India. As a result, society became rigid and almost immovable. For liberty is the only condition of growth.

On the other hand, in the West, the field of variation was society, and the constant point was religion. Conformity was the watchword, and even now is the watchword of European religion, and each new departure had to gain the least advantage only by wading through a river of blood. The result is a splendid social organisation, with a religion that never rose beyond the grossest materialistic conceptions.

To-day the West is awakening to its wants, and the "true self of man," and "spirit" is the watchword of the

advanced school of Western theologians. The student of Sanskrit philosophy knows where the wind is blowing from, but it matters not whence the power comes so long as it brings new life

In India, new circumstances at the same time are persistently demanding a new adjustment of social organizations. For the last three-quarters of a century, India has been bubbling over with reform societies and reformers. But alas, every one of them has proved a failure. They did not know the secret. They had not learned the great lesson to be learned. In their haste, they laid all the evils in our society at the door of religion, and, like the man in the story, wanting to kill the mosquito that sat on a friend's forehead, they were trying to deal such heavy blows as would have killed man and mosquito together. But in this case, fortunately, they only dashed themselves against immovable rocks, and were crushed out of existence in the shock of recoil. Glory unto those noble and unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were necessary to rouse the sleeping leviathan. But they were entirely destructive, and not constructive, and as such they were mortal, and therefore died.

Let us bless them, and profit by their experience. They had not learned the lesson that all is a growth from inside out, that all evolution is only a manifestation of a preceding involution. They did not know that the seed can only assimilate the surrounding elements, but grows a tree in its own nature. Until all the Hindu race becomes extinct, and a new race takes possession of the land, such a thing can never be—try East or West, India can never be Europe until she dies.

And will she die? This old Mother of all that is noble or moral or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which Godlike men still live and breathe? I will



borrow the lantern of the Athenian sage, and follow you, my brother, through the cities and villages, plains and forests, of this broad world—show me such men in other lands if you can. Truly have they said, the tree is known by its fruits. Go under every mango tree in India; pick up bushels of the worm-eaten, unripe, fallen ones from the ground, and write hundreds of the most learned volumes on each one of them—still you have not described a single mango. Pluck a luscious, full-grown, juicy one from the tree, and now you have known all that the mango is.

Similarly, these Man-Gods show what the Hindu religion is. They show the character, the power and the possibilities of that racial tree which counts culture by centuries, and has borne the buffets of a thousand years of hurricane, and still stands with the unimpaired vigour of eternal youth.

Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct; all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest; fraud, force and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be. The power of suffering is infinitely greater than the power of doing, the power of love is infinitely of greater potency than the power of hatred. Those that think that the present revival of Hinduism is only a manifestation of patriotic impulse are deluded.

First, let us study the quaint phenomenon.

Is it not curious that, whilst under the terrific onset of modern scientific research, all the old forts of Western dogmatic religions are crumbling into dust; whilst the sledge-hammer blows of modern science are pulverising the porcelain mass of systems whose foundation is either in faith or in belief, or in the majority of votes of church

synods ; whilst Western theology is at its wit's end to accommodate itself to the ever-rising tide of aggressive modern thought , whilst in all other sacred books the texts have been stretched to their utmost tension, under the ever-increasing pressure of modern thought, and the majority of them are broken and have been stored away in lumber rooms ; whilst the vast majority of thoughtful Western humanity have broken asunder all their ties with the church, and are drifting about in a sea of unrest—the religions which have drunk the water of life at that fountain of light—the Vedas—Hinduism and Buddhism, alone are reviving?

The restless Western atheist or agnostic finds in the Gita or in the Dhammapadam the only place where his soul can anchor

The tables have been turned, and the Hindu, who saw through tears of despair his ancient homestead covered with incendiary fire, ignited by unfriendly hands, now sees, when the search-light of modern thought has dispersed the smoke, that his home is the one that is standing in all its strength, and all the rest have either vanished or are building their houses anew after the Hindu plan. He has wiped away his tears, and has found that the axe that tried to cut down to the roots, the ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखं भक्षयिष्यामि प्राहुर्व्ययम् (Gita xv.1) has proved the merciful knife of the surgeon.

He has found that he has neither to torture texts nor commit any other form of intellectual dishonesty to save his religion. Nay, he may call all that is weak in his Scriptures, weak, because they were meant to be so by the ancient sages, to help the weak, under the theory of—अरुन्धतीदर्शनम् ।<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the ancient sages who have discovered such an all-pervading, ever-expanding system

<sup>1</sup> When a bride is brought to the house of her husband for the first time he shows her a very tiny star, called Arundhati. To do this, he has to direct her gaze the right way, which he

of religion—that can accommodate all that has been discovered in the realm of matter, and all that is to be known—he has begun to appreciate them anew, and discover anew that those discoveries which have proved so disastrous to every limited little scheme of religion, are but rediscoveries, in the plane of intellect and sense-consciousness, of truths which his ancestors discovered ages ago in the higher plane of intuition and super-consciousness.

He has not therefore to give up anything, nor go about seeking for anything anywhere, but it will be enough for him if he can utilise only a little from the infinite store he has inherited, and apply it to his needs. And that he has begun to do, and will do more and more. Is this not the real cause of this revival?

Young men of Bengal, to you I especially appeal

Brethren, we know to our shame, that most of the real evils for which the foreign races abuse the Hindu nation, are only owing to us. We have been the cause of bringing many undeserved calumnies on the head of the other races in India. But glory unto God, we have been fully awakened to it, and with His blessings, we will not only cleanse ourselves, but help the whole of India to attain the ideals preached in the religion eternal.

Let us wipe off first that mark which nature always puts on the forehead of a slave—the stain of jealousy. Be jealous of none. Be ready to lend a hand to every worker of good. Send a good thought for every being in the three worlds.

Let us take our stand on the one central truth in our religion—the common heritage of the Hindus, the Buddhists and Jains alike—the Spirit of man—the Atman

does by asking her to look at something near and something big, in the direction of the star, e.g., a branch of a tree. Next he draws her attention to a large bright star observed beyond this branch and so on, till by several steps, he succeeds in leading her eyes to the right thing. This method of leading to a subtle object through easy and gradual steps is called *Arundhati Nyaya*.

of man,—the immortal, birthless, all-pervading, eternal Soul of man whose glories the Vedas cannot themselves express, before whose majesty the universe with its galaxy upon galaxy of suns and stars and nebulae is as a drop. Every man or woman, nay, from the highest Devas to the worm that crawls under our feet, is such a Spirit evolved or involutioned. The difference is not in kind, but in degree.

This infinite power of the Spirit, brought to bear upon matter, evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon itself, makes of man a God.

First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. "Be and make." Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a devil, it would be our duty to remember God always, and not the devil.

If the room is dark, the constant feeling and repeating of darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative, the constructive that is immortal, that will remain for ever. Let us say, "We are" and "God is," and "We are God." "Sivoham, Sivoham." And march on. Not matter but Spirit. All that has name and form is subject to all that has none. This is the eternal truth the Srutis preach. Bring in the light, the darkness will vanish of itself. Let the lion of Vedanta roar. The foxes will fly to their holes. Throw the ideas broadcast, and let the result take care of itself. Let us put the chemicals together, the crystallisation will take its own course. Bring forth the power of the Spirit, and pour it over the length and breadth of India, and all that is necessary will come by itself.

Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it. Remember the illustration of Indra and Virochana in the Vedas; both

were taught their divinity, but the Asura Virochana took his body for his God. Indra being a Deva, understood that the Atman was meant. You are the children of Indra. You are the descendants of the Devas. Matter can never be your God ; body can never be your God.

India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the Spirit ; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love, the garb of the Sannyâsîn, not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging-bowl. Say not that you are weak. The Spirit is omnipotent. Look at that handful of young men called into existence by the divine touch of Ramakrishna's feet. They have preached the message from Assam to Sindh, from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin. They have crossed the Himalayas at a height of twenty thousand feet over snow and ice on foot, and penetrated into the mysteries of Thibet. They have begged their bread, covered themselves with rags ; they have been persecuted, followed by the police, kept in prison, and at last set free when the Government was convinced of their innocence.

They are now twenty. Make them two thousand to-morrow. Young men of Bengal, your country requires it. The world requires it. Call up the divinity within you, which will enable you to bear hunger and thirst, heat and cold. Sitting in luxurious homes, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and doling out a little amateur religion may be good for other lands, but India has a truer instinct. It intuitively detects the mask. You must give up. Be great. No great work can be done without sacrifice. The Purusha Himself sacrificed Himself to create this world. Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your names, fame or position, nay even your lives, and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross this ocean of life. Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care under what banner you march. Do not care what

be your colour, green, blue or red, but mix all the colours up and produce that intense glow of white, the colour of love. Ours is to work. The results will take care of themselves. If any social institution stands in your way of becoming God, it will give way before the power of Spirit. I do not see into the future, nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as life before me. That the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.

Yours ever in love and labour,—

VIVEKANANDA.

---

## A MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY TO A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus said the old Jewish saint when suffering the greatest calamities that could befall man, and he erred not. Herein lies the whole secret of Existence. Waves may roll over the surface and tempest rage, but deep down there is the stratum of infinite calmness, infinite peace, and of infinite bliss "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" And why? Because it is during these moments of visitations when the heart is wrung by hands which never stop for the father's cries or the mother's wail, when under the load of sorrow, dejection and despair, the world seems to be cut off from under our feet, and when the whole horizon seems to be nothing but an impenetrable sheet of misery and utter despair—that the internal eyes open, light flashes all of a sudden, the dream vanishes, and intuitively we come face to face with the grandest mystery in nature—Existence. Yes, then it is—when the load would be sufficient to sink a lot of frail vessels—that the man of genius, of strength, the hero, sees that infinite, absolute, ever-blissful Existence *per se*, that infinite Being who is called and worshipped under different names, in different climes. Then it is the shackles that bind the soul down to this hole of misery break, as it were, for a time, and unfettered it rises and rises until it reaches the throne of the Lord, "Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1893 to a Madras friend who just had a severe domestic affliction

are at rest " Cease not, brother, to send up petitions day and night, cease not to say day and night—**THY WILL BE DONE**

"Ours not to question why,  
Ours but to do and die "

Blessed be Thy name, O Lord! And, Thy will be done Lord, we know that we are to submit, Lord, we know that it is the Mother's hand that is striking, and "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak " There is, Father of Love, an agony at the heart which is fighting against that calm resignation which Thou teachest Give us strength, O Thou who sawest Thy whole family destroyed before Thine eyes, with Thine hands crossed on Thy breast Come, Lord, Thou Great Teacher, who hast taught us that the soldier is only to obey and speak not Come, Lord, come Arjuna's Charioteer, and teach me as Thou once taughtest him, that resignation in *Thyself* is the highest end and aim of this life, so that with those great ones of old, I may also firmly and resignedly cry, Om Sri Krishnârpanamastu

May the Lord send you peace is the prayer day and night of—

VIVEKANANDA



## WHAT WE BELIEVE IN<sup>1</sup>

I agree with you so far that faith is a wonderful insight and that it alone can save, but there is the danger in it of breeding fanaticism and barring further progress

Jnânâ is all right, but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble, but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism.

A harmony of all these is the thing required. Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between ; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipoising, adjusting and fulfilling one another. This would be *harmony* by a number of persons, and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds

For a religion to be effective, enthusiasm is necessary. At the same time we must try to avoid the danger of multiplying creeds We avoid that by being a non-sectarian sect, having all the advantages of a sect and the broadness of a universal religion

God, though everywhere, can be known to us in and through human character No character was ever so perfect as Ramakrishna, and that should be the centre round which we ought to rally, at the same time allowing everybody to regard him in his own light, either as God, Saviour, teacher, model, or great man, just as he pleases

We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way.

We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist,

<sup>1</sup> Written to a disciple on March 3, 1894, from Chicago.

polytheist, agnostic nor atheist, the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense. Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others.

Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is *vice*, whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonised is *virtue*.

We leave everybody free to know, select and follow whatever suits and helps him. Thus, for example, eating meat may help one, eating fruit another. Each is welcome to his own peculiarity, but he has no right to criticise the conduct of others, because that would, if followed by him, injure him, much less to insist that others should follow his way. A wife may help some people in this progress, to others she may be a positive injury. But the unmarried man has no right to say that the married disciple is wrong, much less to force his own ideal of morality upon his brother.

We believe that every being is divine, is God. Every soul is a sun covered over with clouds of ignorance, the difference between soul and soul is due to the difference in density of these layers of clouds. We believe that this is the conscious or unconscious basis of all religions, and that this is the explanation of the whole history of human progress either in the material, intellectual, or spiritual plane—the same Spirit is manifesting through different planes.

We believe that this is the very essence of the Vedas.

We believe that it is the duty of every soul to treat, think of and behave to other souls as such, i.e. as Gods, and not hate or despise, or vilify, or try to injure them by any manner or means. This is the duty not only of the Sannyâsin but of all men and women.

The soul has neither sex, nor caste, nor imperfection.

We believe that nowhere throughout the Vedas, Darsanas, or Purânas, or Tantras, is it ever said that the soul has any sex, creed, or caste. Therefore we agree with those who say, "What has religion to do with social reforms?" But they must also agree with us when we tell them that religion has no business to formulate social laws and insist on the difference between beings. Because its aim and end is to obliterate all such fictions and monstrosities

If it be pleaded that through this difference we would reach the final equality and unity, we answer that the same religion has said over and over again, that mud cannot be washed with mud. As if a man can be moral by being immoral!

Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. But how hypocritically it says and thereby contradicts itself—"Social reform is not the business of religion." True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a social law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come right.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.

Therefore the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to remove all obstructions from the way. Hands off! as I always say, and everything will be right. That is, our duty is to clear the way. The Lord does the rest.

Especially therefore you must bear in mind that religion has to do only with the soul and has no business to interfere in social matters—you must also bear in mind that this applies completely to the mischief which has already been done. It is as if a man after forcibly taking

possession of another's property cries through the nose when that man tries to regain it—and preaches the doctrine of the sanctity of human right!

What business had the priests to interfere (to the misery of millions of human beings) in every social matter?

You speak of the meat-eating Kshatriya. Meat or no meat, it is they who are the fathers of all that is noble and beautiful in Hinduism. Who wrote the Upanishads? Who was Râma? Who was Krishna? Who was Buddha? Who were the Tirthankaras of the Jains? Whenever the Kshatriyas have preached religion, they have given it to everybody, and whenever the Brâhmans wrote anything they would deny all right to others. Read the Gita and the Sutras of Vyâsa, or get some one to read them to you. In the Gita the way is laid open to all men and women, to all caste and colour, but Vyasa tries to put meanings upon the Vedas to cheat the poor Sudras. Is God a nervous fool like you that the flow of His river of mercy would be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a pie!

Hope nothing from me, but I am convinced as I have written to you, and spoken to you, that India is to be saved by the Indians themselves. So you, young men of the motherland, can dozens of you become almost fanatics over this new ideal? Take thought, collect materials, write a sketch of the life of Ramakrishna, *studiously avoiding all miracles*. The life should be written as an illustration of the doctrines he preached. Only his—do not bring me or any living persons into that. The main aim should be to give to the world what he taught, and the life as illustrating that. I, unworthy though I am, had one commission—to bring out the casket of jewels that was placed in my charge, and make it over to you. Why to you? Because the hypocrites, the jealous, the slavish, and the cowardly, those who believe in matter only, can never do anything. Jealousy is the bane of our national

character, natural to slaves Even the Lord with all His power could do nothing on account of this jealousy. Think of me as one who has done all his duty and is now dead and gone. Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders Think that you, young men of our motherland, are destined to do this Put yourselves to the task Lord bless you Leave me, throw me quite out of sight Preach the new ideal, the new doctrine, the new life. Preach against nobody, against no custom Preach neither for nor against caste or any other social evil. Preach to let "Hands off," and everything will come right

My blessings on you all, my brave, steadfast and loving souls.

---

—

## OUR DUTY TO THE MASSES<sup>1</sup>

SRI NÂRÂYANA bless you and yours Through your Highness' kind help it has been possible for me to come to this country Since then I have become well known here, and the hospitable people of this country have supplied all my wants. It is a wonderful country and this is a wonderful nation in many respects No other nation applies so much machinery in their everyday work as do the people of this country. Everything is machine Then again, they are only one-twentieth of the whole population of the world Yet they have fully one-sixth of all the wealth of the world There is no limit to their wealth and luxuries Yet everything here is so dear The wages of labour are the highest in the world, yet the fight between labour and capital is constant.

Nowhere on earth have women so many privileges as in America They are slowly taking everything into their hands and, strange to say, the number of cultured women is much greater than that of cultured men Of course, the higher geniuses are mostly from the rank of males With all the criticism of the Westerners against our caste, they have a worse one—that of money The almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here

No country on earth has so many laws, and in no country are they so little regarded On the whole our poor Hindu people are infinitely more moral than any of the Westerners In religion they practise here either hypocrisy or fanaticism. Sober-minded men have become disgusted with their superstitious religions and are looking forward to India for new light Your Highness cannot realise without seeing how eagerly they take in any little bit of the grand thoughts of the holy

<sup>1</sup> Written from Chicago to H. H. the Maharajah of Mysore on June 23, 1894

Vedas, which resist and are unharmed by the terrible onslaughts of modern science. The theories of creation out of nothing, of a created soul, and of the big tyrant of a God sitting on a throne in a place called heaven, and of the eternal hell-fires, have disgusted all the educated ; and the noble thoughts of the Vedas about the eternity of creation and of the soul, and about the God in our own soul, they are imbibing fast in one shape or other. Within fifty years the educated of the world will come to believe in the eternity of both soul and creation, and in God as our highest and perfect nature, as taught in our holy Vedas. Even now their learned priests are interpreting the Bible in that way. My conclusion is that they require more spiritual civilisation, and we, more material

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils, compared to them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas ; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long time. I could not accomplish it in India, and that was the reason of my coming to this country. The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor, is this. Supposing even your Highness

opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such, that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing Sannyâsins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc. They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books. This requires an organisation, which again means money. Men enough there are in India to work out this plan, but alas! they have no money. It is very difficult to set a wheel in motion, but when once set, it goes on with increasing velocity. After seeking help in my own country and failing to get any sympathy from the rich, I came over to this country through your Highness' aid. The Americans do not care a bit whether the poor of India die or live. And why should they, when our own people never think of anything but their own selfish ends?

My noble Prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded and royal son of India as your Highness, can do much towards raising India on her feet again, and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped.

That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of—

VIVEKANANDA



## REPLY TO THE CALCUTTA ADDRESS<sup>1</sup>

I am in receipt of the resolutions that were passed at the recent Town Hall meeting in Calcutta, and the kind words my fellow-citizens sent over to me.

Accept, sir, my most heart-felt gratitude for your appreciation of my insignificant services

I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy or holiness—the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one.

To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations

Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself—is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a bye-word, and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate

Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throw them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive

<sup>1</sup> Written from New York on Nov 18th, 1894, to the President of the public meeting held at the Calcutta Town Hall in appreciation of Swami Vivekananda's work in the West.

what others have to give her Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life

We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts, renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness, and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised, are supported by the strong pillars of character, and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power

Do any deserve liberty who are not ready to give it to others? Let us calmly and in a manly fashion go to work, instead of dissipating our energy in unnecessary frettings and fumings. I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from any one anything he really deserves The past was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still.

May Sankara keep us steady in purity, patience and perseverance!

---

## TO MY BRAVE BOYS<sup>1</sup>

Push on with the organisation. Nothing else is necessary but these—*Love, Sinc̄erity and Patience*. What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. love? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life, all selfishness is death, and this is true here or hereafter. It is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are ghosts—for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. Feel, my children, feel, feel for the poor, the ignorant, the down-trodden, feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad——then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy. Struggle, struggle was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still say I. When it was all dark I used to say, struggle, when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children. Look not up in that attitude of fear towards that infinite starry vault as if it would crush you. Wait! In a few hours more the whole of it will be under your feet. Wait, money does not pay, nor name, fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamantine walls of difficulties.

Now the question before us is this. There cannot be any growth without liberty. Our ancestors freed religious thought and we have a wonderful religion, but they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is, in a word, horrid, diabolical. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. Just as man

<sup>1</sup> Written from New York on 19th November, 1894

must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress and marriage and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others

We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilisation. Even the Mohammedans taught them to wear tailor-made clothes. Would the Hindus had learned from the Mohammedans how to eat in a cleanly way without mixing their food with the dust of the streets! Material civilisation, nay, even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organize meetings to get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty. Suppose the English give over to you all the power. Why, the powers that be then, will hold the people down, and let them not have it. Slaves want power to make slaves.

Now, this is to be brought about slowly and by only insisting on our religion, and giving liberty to society. Root up priestcraft from the old religion and you get the best religion in the world. Do you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's religion? I believe it is possible and must be.

The grand plan is to start a colony in Central India, where you can follow your own ideas independently, and

then a little leaven will leaven all In the meanwhile form a Central Association, and go on branching off all over India Start only on religious grounds now, and do not preach any violent social reform at present, only do not countenance foolish superstitions Try to revive society on the old grounds of universal salvation and equality as laid down by the old Masters, such as Sankarâchârya, Râmânuja and Chaitanya

Have fire and spread all over Work, work. Be the servant while leading, be unselfish, and *never listen to one friend in private accusing another*. Have infinite patience and success is yours

Now take care of this: Do not try to "boss" others, as the Yankees say. Because I always direct my letters to you, you need not try to show your consequence over my other friends I know you never can be such a fool, but still I think it my duty to warn you. This is what kills all organisations. Work, work, for, to work only for the good of others is life

I want that there should be no hypocrisy, no Jesuitism, no roguery. I have depended always on the Lord, always on Truth broad as the light of day Let me not die with stains on my conscience for having played Jesuitism to get up name or fame, or even to do good. There should not be a breath of immorality, nor a stain of policy which is bad.

No shilly-shally, no *esoteric blackguardism*, no secret humbug, nothing should be done in a corner. No special favouritism of the Master, no Master at that, even. Onward, my brave boys—money or no money—men or no men! Have you love? Have you God? Onward, and forward to the breach, you are irresistible!

How absurd! The Theosophical magazines saying that they, the Theosophists, prepared the way to my success! Indeed! Pure nonsense! Theosophists prepared the way!

Take care! Beware of everything that is untrue ; stick to truth and we shall succeed, maybe slowly, but surely. Work on as if I never existed. Work as if on each of you depended the whole work. Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you. Work on. I do not know when I shall be able to come. This is a great field for work. They can at best praise in India, but they will not give a cent for anything, and where shall they get it, *beggars* themselves? Then, they have lost the faculty of doing public good for the last two thousand years or more. They are just learning the ideas of nation, public, etc. So I need not blame them.

Blessings to you all!

---

## A PLAN OF WORK FOR INDIA<sup>1</sup>

It is with a heart full of love, gratitude and trust that I take up my pen to write to you. Let me tell you first, that you are one of the few men that I have met in my life who are thorough in their convictions. You have a whole-souled possession of a wonderful combination of feeling and knowledge, and withal a practical ability to bring ideas into realised forms. Above all, you are sincere, and as such I confide to you some of my ideas.

The work has begun well in India, and it should not only be kept up but pushed on with the greatest vigour. Now or never is the time. After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the following plan. First, it would be well to open a Theological College in Madras, and then gradually extend its scope, to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhâshyas and Philosophies, including a knowledge of the other religions of the world. At the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College.

This is the first step to be taken, and huge things grow out of small undertakings. Madras just now is following the golden mean by appreciating both the ancient and modern phases of life.

I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this. We have not done *badly* in the past, certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but good, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor from bad to good, but from truth to higher truth, from good to

<sup>1</sup> Written to a distinguished Indian from Chicago, 3rd Jan. 1895.

better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well—now is the time to do better.

Now take the case of caste. In Sanskrit, *Jāti i e*, species—now, this is the first idea of creation. Variation (*Vichitratâ*), that is to say *Jati*, means creation. “I am One, I become many” (various Vedas) Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of *Jati* was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his *Prakṛti*, his *Jati*, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India’s downfall?—the giving up of this idea of caste. As Gita says, with the extinction of caste the world will be destroyed. Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations the world will be destroyed. The present caste is not the real *Jati*, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of *Jati*, *i e*, caste or variation. Any crystallised custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (*Jati*) from having its full sway, and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this —That India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste. Let *Jati* have its sway, break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals, each developing his caste—Europe rose. In America, there is the best scope for caste (real *Jati*) to develop, and so the people are great. Every Hindu knows that



astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl as soon as he or she is born That is the real caste—the individuality, and *Jyotish* recognises that And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety does not mean inequality, nor any special privilege

This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing, but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude Of course, we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny, for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death Now that that pressure has gone, we must move forward, not on the lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but along our own line, our own road. Everything is hideous because the building is unfinished We had to stop building during centuries of oppression Now finish the building and everything will look beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan I am thoroughly convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life, in India it is religion Make it strong and the waters on either side must move along with it. This is one phase of my line of thought In time, I hope to bring them all out, but at present I find I have a mission in this country, also. Moreover, I expect help in this country and from here alone But up to date I could not do anything except spread my ideas. Now I want that a similar attempt be made in India.

I do not know when I shall go over to India I obey the leading of the Lord I am in His hands

“In this world in search of wealth, Thou art, O Lord, the greatest jewel I have found I sacrifice myself unto Thee ”

“In search of some one to love, Thou art the One Beloved I have found I sacrifice myself unto Thee ”  
(Yajur Veda Samhita)

May the Lord bless you for ever and ever !

---

## KALI THE MOTHER

The stars are blotted out,  
The clouds are covering clouds,  
It is darkness vibrant, sonant  
In the roaring, whirling wind  
Are the souls of a million lunatics  
Just loose from the prison house,  
Wrenching trees by the roots,  
Sweeping all from the path.  
The sea has joined the fray,  
And swirls up mountain-waves,  
To reach the pitchy sky,  
The flash of lurid light  
Reveals on every side  
A thousand, thousand shades  
Of Death begrimed and black—  
Scattering plagues and sorrows,  
Dancing mad with joy  
Come, Mother, come!  
For Terror is Thy name,  
Death is in Thy breath,  
And every shaking step  
Destroys a world for e'er  
Thou 'Time,' the All-Destroyer!  
Come, O Mother, come!  
Who dares misery love,  
And hug the form of Death,  
Dance is Destruction's dance,  
To him the Mother comes

---

# ANGELS UNAWARES<sup>1</sup>

## I

One bending low with load—of life  
That meant no joy, but suffering harsh and hard—  
And wending on his way through dark and dismal paths,  
Without a flash of light from brain or heart  
To give a moment's cheer, till the line  
That marks out pain from pleasure, death from life  
And good from what is evil, was well-nigh wiped from  
sight,  
Saw, one blessed night, a faint but beautiful ray of light  
Descend to him. He knew not what or wherefrom,  
But called it GOD and worshipped.  
Hope, an utter stranger, came to him, and spread  
Through all his parts, and life to him meant more  
Than he could ever dream, and covered all he knew,  
Nay, peeped beyond his world The Sages  
Winked, and smiled, and called it "superstition."  
But he did feel its power and peace  
And gently answered back—

"O Blessed Superstition!"

## II

One drunk with wine of wealth and power  
And health to enjoy them both, whirled on  
His maddening course, till the earth, he thought,  
Was made for him, his pleasure-garden, and man,  
The crawling worm, was made to find him sport,  
Till the thousand lights of joy, with pleasure fed,  
That flickered day and night before his eyes,

<sup>1</sup> Written in November, 1898

With constant change of colours, began to blur  
 His sight, and cloy his senses ; till selfishness,  
 Like a horny growth, had spread all o'er his heart ,  
 And pleasure meant to him no more than pain,  
 Bereft of feeling , and life in the sense,  
 So joyful, precious once, a rotting corpse between his  
arms,  
 Which he forsooth would shun, but more he tried, the  
more  
 It clung to him , and wished, with frenzied brain,  
 A thousand forms of death, but quailed before the charm,  
 Then sorrow came—and Wealth and Power went—  
 And made him kinship find with all the human race  
 In groans and tears, and though his friends would laugh,  
 His lips would speak in grateful accents—  
“O Blessed Misery !”

### III

One born with healthy frame—but not of will  
 That can resist emotions deep and strong,  
 Nor impulse throw, surcharged with potent strength—  
 And just the sort that pass as good and kind,  
 Beheld that he was safe, whilst others long  
 And vain did struggle 'gainst the surging waves  
 Till, morbid grown, his mind could see, like flies  
 That seek the putrid part, but what was bad  
 Then Fortune smiled on him, and his foot slipped  
 That ope'd his eyes for e'er, and made him find  
*That stones and trees ne'er break the law,*  
*But stones and trees remain ; that man alone*  
 Is blest with power to fight and conquer Fate,  
 Transcending bounds and laws.

From him his passive nature fell, and life appeared  
 As broad and new, and broader, newer grew,  
 Till light ahead began to break, and glimpse of That  
 Where Peace Eternal dwells—yet one can only reach

By wading through the sea of struggles—courage-giving,  
came.

Then, looking back on all that made him kin  
To stocks and stones, and on to what the world  
Had shunned him for, his fall, he blessed the fall,  
And, with a joyful heart, declared it—

“Blessed Sin!”

## TO THE AWAKENED INDIA<sup>1</sup>

Once more awake!

For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life  
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions  
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!  
No death for thee!

Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break the  
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust  
That lies so low Yet strong and steady,  
Blissful, bold and free Awakener, ever  
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

Thy home is gone,

Where loving hearts had brought thee up, and  
Watched with joy thy growth But Fate is strong—  
This is the law—all things come back to the source  
They sprung, their strength to renew.

<sup>1</sup> Written to *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India*, in Aug., 1898, when the journal was transferred from Madras to Almora, Himalayas, into the hands of the Brotherhood founded by Swami Vivekananda

Then start afresh

From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted  
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,  
For working wonders new    The heavenly  
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song ,  
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace

And all above,

Himala's daughter Umâ, gentle, pure,  
The Mother that resides in all as Power  
And Life, who works all works, and  
Makes of One the world, whose mercy  
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows  
The One in All, give thee untiring  
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,

The seers great, whom age nor clime  
Can claim their own, the fathers of the  
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,  
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or  
Well    Their servant, thou hast got  
The secret—'tis but One

Then speak, O Love!—

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how  
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams  
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,  
In all its glory shines—

And tell the world—

Awake, arise, and dream no more!  
This is the land of dreams, where Karma  
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,  
Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none  
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which  
The softest breath of Truth drives back to

Primal nothingness Be bold, and face  
 The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,  
 Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
 Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

---

### REQUIESCAT IN PACE<sup>1</sup>

Speed forth, O Soul! upon thy star-strewn path ;  
 Speed, blissful one! where thought is ever free,  
 Where time and space no longer mist the view,  
 Eternal peace and blessings be with thee!

Thy service true complete thy sacrifice,  
 Thy home the heart of love transcendent find ;  
 Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,  
 Like altar roses fill thy place behind!

Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found,  
 And one with That which comes as Death and Life ;  
 Thou helpful one! unselfish e'er on earth,  
 Ahead! still help with love this world of strife!

---

### HOLD ON YET A WHILE, BRAVE HEART<sup>2</sup>

If the sun by the cloud is hidden a bit,  
 If the welkin shows but gloom,  
 Still hold on yet a while, brave heart,  
 The victory is sure to come.

<sup>1</sup> Written in memoriam to J. J. Goodwin, August, 1898.  
<sup>2</sup> Written to H. H. The Maharaja of Khetri, Rajputana.

No winter was but summer came behind,  
Each hollow crests the wave,  
They push each other in light and shade ;  
Be steady then and brave.

The duties of life are sore indeed,  
And its pleasures fleeting, vain,  
The goal so shadowy seems and dim,  
Yet plod on through the dark, brave heart,  
With all thy might and main.

Not a work will be lost, no struggle vain,  
Though hopes be blighted, powers gone ,  
Of thy loins shall come the heirs to all,  
Then hold on yet a while, brave soul,  
No good is e'er undone

Though the good and the wise in life are few,  
Yet theirs are the reins to lead,  
The masses know but late the worth ,  
Heed none and gently guide.

With thee are those who see afar,  
With thee is the Lord of might,  
All blessings pour on thee, great soul,  
To thee may all come right !

---



## NIRVANASHATKAM, OR SIX STANZAS ON NIRVANA<sup>1</sup>

I am neither the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego,  
nor the mind-stuff ;

I am neither the body, nor the changes of the body ;

I am neither the senses of hearing, taste, smell or sight,

Nor am I the ether, the earth, the fire, the air ;

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss

Absolute—

I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I am neither the Prâna, nor the five vital airs ;

I am neither the materials of the body, nor the five

sheaths ;

Neither am I the organs of action, nor object of the senses ;

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss

Absolute—

I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I have neither aversion nor attachment, neither greed

nor delusion ;

Neither egotism nor envy, neither Dharma nor Moksha ;

I am neither desire nor objects of desire ;

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss

Absolute—

I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I am neither sin nor virtue, neither pleasure nor pain ;

Nor temple nor worship, nor pilgrimage nor scriptures,

Neither the act of enjoying, the enjoyable nor the enjoyer ;

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss

Absolute—

I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham)

<sup>1</sup> Translation of a poem by Sankarâchârya.

I have neither death nor fear of death, nor caste ,  
Nor was I ever born, nor had I parents, friends and  
relations ,

I have neither Guru nor disciple ,  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss  
Absolute—

I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham)  
I am untouched by the senses, I am neither Mukti nor knowable ;

I am without form, without limit, beyond space,  
beyond time ;

I am in everything , I am the basis of the universe ,  
everywhere am I.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—

I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham)

## THE SONG OF THE SANNYASIN<sup>1</sup>

Wake up the note! the song that had its birth  
Far off, where worldly taint could never reach  
In mountain caves, and glades of forest deep,  
Whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or fame  
Could ever dare to break, where rolled the stream  
Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that follows both  
Sing high that note, Sannyâsin bold! Say—  
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

<sup>1</sup> Composed at the Thousand Island Park, New York, in July, 1895

Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,  
 Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore,  
 Love, hate—good, bad—and all the dual throng.  
 Know, slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free ;  
 For fetters though of gold, are not less strong to bind ;  
 Then, off with them, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Let darkness go ; the will-o'-the-wisp that leads  
 With blinking light to pile more gloom on gloom.  
 This thirst for life, for ever quench ; it drags  
 From birth to death, and death to birth, the soul  
 He conquers all who conquers self Know this  
 And never yield, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

“Who sows must reap”, they say, “and cause must bring  
 The sure effect ; good, good , bad, bad ; and none  
 Escape the law. But whoso wears a form  
 Must wear the chain.” Too true ; but far beyond  
 Both name and form is Atman, ever free.  
 Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

They know not truth, who dream such vacant dreams  
 As father, mother, children, wife and friend,  
 The sexless Self! whose father He? whose child?  
 Whose friend, whose foe is He who is but One?  
 The Self is all in all, none else exists ;  
 And thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

There is but One—The Free—The knower—Self!  
 Without a name, without a form or stain  
 In Him is Mâyâ, dreaming all this dream.  
 The Witness, He appears as nature, soul  
 Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Where seekest thou? That freedom, friend, this world  
 Nor that, can give In books and temples vain  
 Thy search Thine only is the hand that holds  
 The rope that drags thee on Then cease lament,  
 Let go thy hold, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Say, “Peace to all From me no danger be  
 To aught that lives In those that dwell on high,  
 In those that lowly creep, I am the Self in all!  
 All life both here and there, do I renounce,  
 All heavens, and earths and hells, all hopes and fears”  
 Thus cut thy bonds, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Heed then no more how body lives or goes,  
 Its task is done Let Karma float it down;  
 Let one put garlands on, another kick  
 This frame; say naught No praise or blame can be  
 Where praiser, praised, and blamer, blamed are—one  
 Thus be thou calm, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed  
 Of gain reside No man, who thinks of woman  
 As his wife can ever perfect be,  
 Nor he who owns the least of things, nor he  
 Whom anger chains, can ever pass thro’ Maya’s gates.  
 So, give these up, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Have thou no home What home can hold thee, friend?  
 The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed, and food,  
 What chance may bring, well cooked or ill, judge not  
 No food or drink can tant that noble Self  
 Which knows itself. Like rolling river free  
 Thou ever be, Sannyasin bold! Say—

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Few only know the truth The rest will hate  
And laugh at thee, great one, but pay no heed  
God thou, the free, from place to place, and help  
Them out of darkness, Maya's veil Without  
The fear of pain or search for pleasure, go  
Beyond them both, Sannyasin bold! Say—  
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Thus, day by day, till Karma's powers spent  
Release the soul for ever No more is birth,  
Nor I, nor thou, nor God, nor man The "I"  
Has All become, the All is "I" and Bliss.  
Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say—  
"Om Tat Sat, Om I!"

PEACE<sup>1</sup>

Behold, it comes in might,  
The power that is not power,  
The light that is in darkness,  
The shade in dazzling light.

It is joy that never spoke,  
And grief unfelt, profound,  
Immortal life unlived,  
Eternal death unmourned.

It is not joy nor sorrow,  
But that which is between,  
It is not night nor mornow,  
But that which joins them in.

<sup>1</sup> Composed at Ridgeley Manor, New York, 1899.

It is sweet rest in music ;  
And pause in sacred art ,  
The silence between speaking ;  
Between two fits of passion—  
It is the calm of heart

It is beauty never seen,  
And love that stands alone,  
It is song that lives un-sung,  
And knowledge never known

It is death between two lives,  
And lull between two storms,  
The void whence rose creation,  
And that where it returns

To it the tear-drop goes,  
To spread the smiling form.  
It is the Goal of Life,  
And Peace—its only home !

---



TRANSLATION OF WRITINGS  
— PROSE AND POEMS I



## THE PROBLEM OF MODERN INDIA AND ITS SOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

The ancient history of India is full of descriptions of the gigantic energies and their multifarious workings, the boundless spirit, the combination of indomitable action and reaction of the various forces, and, above all, the profound thoughtfulness of a godly race. If the word history is understood to mean merely narratives of kings and emperors, and pictures of society—tyrannised over from time to time by the evil passions, haughtiness, avarice, etc., of the rulers of the time, portraying the acts resulting from their good or evil propensities, and how these reacted upon the society of that time—such a history India perhaps does not possess. But every line of that mass of the religious literature of India, her ocean of poetry, her philosophies and various scientific works reveal to us—a thousand times more clearly than the narratives of the life-incidents and genealogies of particular kings and emperors can ever do—the exact position and every step made in advance by that vast body of men who, even from before the dawn of civilisation, impelled by hunger and thirst, lust and greed, etc., attracted by the charm of beauty, endowed with a great and indomitable mental power, and moved by various sentiments, arrived through various ways and means at that stage of eminence. Although the heaps of those triumphal flags which they gathered in their in-

<sup>1</sup> The above is a translation of the first Bengali article written by Swami Vivekananda as an introduction to the *Udbodhana*, when it was started on the 14th of January, 1899, as the Bengali fortnightly (afterwards monthly) journal of the Ramakrishna Mission.

numerable victories over nature with which they had been waging war for ages, have, of late, been torn and tattered by the violent winds of adverse circumstances, and become worn out through age, yet, they still proclaim the glory of Ancient India

Whether this race slowly proceeded from Central Asia, Northern Europe, or the Arctic regions, and gradually came down and sanctified India by settling there at last, or whether the holy land of India was their original native place, we have no proper means of knowing now. Or whether a vast race living in or outside India, being displaced from its original abode, in conformity with natural laws, came in the course of time to colonise and settle over Europe and other places—and whether these people were white or black, blue-eyed or dark-eyed, golden-haired or black-haired—all these matters—there is no sufficient ground to prove now, with the one exception of the fact of the kinship of Sanskrit with a few European languages. Similarly, it is not easy to arrive at a final conclusion as to the modern Indians, whether they all are the pure descendants of that race, or how much of the blood of that race is flowing in their veins, or again, what races amongst them have any of that even in them. — However, we do not, in fact, lose much by this uncertainty

But there is one fact to remember. Of that ancient Indian race, upon which the rays of civilisation first dawned, where deep thoughtfulness first revealed itself, in full glory, there are still found hundreds of thousands of its children, born of its mind—the inheritors of its thoughts and sentiments—ready to claim them

Crossing over mountains, rivers and oceans, setting at naught, as it were, the obstacles of the distance of space and time, the blood of Indian thought has flowed and is still flowing into the veins of other nations of the globe, whether in a distinct, or in some subtle unknown way.

Perhaps to us belongs the major portion of that universal ancient inheritance.

In a small country lying in the eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea, beautified and adorned by nature, and garlanded by well-formed and beautiful-looking islands, lived a race of men who were few in number, but of a very charming aspect, perfectly formed, and strong in muscles and sinews, light of body, yet possessing steadiness and perseverance, and who were unrivalled for the creation of all earthly beauties, as well as endowed with extraordinary practicality and intellect. The other ancient nations used to call them Yavanas, but they called themselves Greeks. This handful of a vigorous and wonderful race is a unique example in the annals of man. Wherever and in whatever nation, there has been, or is, any advance made in earthly science, up to the present day—such as, social, martial, political, sculptural, etc.,—there the shadow of ancient-Greece has fallen. Let us leave apart the consideration of ancient times, for, even in this modern age, we, the Bengalees, think ourselves proud and enlightened simply by following the footmarks of these Yavana Gurus for these last fifty years, illumining our homes with what light of theirs is reaching us through the European literature.

The whole of Europe nowadays is, in every respect, the disciple of ancient Greece, and her proper inheritor ; so much so, that a wise man of England has said, "Whatever nature has not created, that is the creation of the Greek mind "

These two gigantic rivers (Aryans and Yavanas) issuing from far-away and different mountains (India and Greece), occasionally come in contact with each other, and whenever such confluence takes place, a tremendous intellectual or spiritual tide, rising in human societies, greatly expands the range of civilisation and confirms the bond of universal brotherhood among men.

Once in far remote antiquity, the Indian philosophy coming in contact with Greek energy, led to the rise of the Persian, the Roman and other great nations. After the invasion of Alexander the Great, these two great waterfalls colliding with each other, deluged nearly half of the globe with spiritual tides, such as, Christianity, etc. Again, a similar commingling, resulting in the improvement and prosperity of Arabia, laid the foundation of modern European civilisation. And perhaps, in our own day, such a time for the conjunction of these two gigantic forces has presented itself again. This time their centre is India.

The air of India pre-eminently conduces to quietness, the nature of the Yavana is the constant expression of power, profound meditation characterises the one, the indomitable spirit of dexterous activity, the other one's motto is "renunciation," the other's "enjoyment." One's whole energy is directed inwards, the other's, outwards, one's whole learning consists in the knowledge of the Self, or the Subject, the other's, in the knowledge of the not-Self, or the object (perishable creation), one loves Moksha (spiritual freedom), the other loves political independence, one is unmindful of gaining prosperity in this world, the other sets his whole heart on making a heaven of this world, one, aspiring after eternal bliss, is indifferent to all the ephemeral pleasures of this life, and the other, doubting the existence of eternal bliss, or knowing it to be far away, directs his whole energy to the attainment of earthly pleasures as much as possible.

In this age, both these types of mankind are extinct, only their physical and mental children, their works and thoughts are existing.

Europe and America are the advanced children of the Yavanas, a glory to their forefathers, but the modern inhabitants of the land of Bharata are not the glory of the ancient Aryans. But, as fire remains intact under cover of ashes, so the ancestral fire still remains latent in these

modern Indians Through the grace of the Almighty Power, it is sure to manifest itself in time

What will accrue when that ancestral fire manifests itself?

Would the sky of India again appear clouded over by waving masses of smoke springing from the Vedic sacrificial fire? Or is the glory of Rantideva again going to be revived in the blood of the sacrificed animals? Are the old customs of Gomedha, Ashvamedha, or perpetuating the lineage from a husband's brother, and other usages of a like nature, to come back again? Or is the deluge of a Buddhist propaganda again going to turn the whole of India into a big monastery? Are the laws of Manu going to be rehabilitated as of yore? Or is the discrimination of food, prescribed and forbidden, varying in accordance with geographical dimensions, as it is at the present day, alone going to have its all-powerful domination over the length and breadth of the country? Is the caste system to remain, and is it going to depend eternally upon the birth-right of a man, or is it going to be determined by his qualification? And again in that caste system, is the discrimination of food, its touchableness or untouchableness, dependent upon the purity or the impurity of the man who touches it, to be observed as it is in Bengal, or will it assume a form more strict as it does in Madras? Or, as in the Punjab, will all such restrictions be obliterated? Are the marriages of the different Varnas to take place from the upper to the lower Varna in the successive order, as in Manu's days, and as it is still in vogue in Nepal? Or, as in Bengal and other places, are they to be kept restricted to a very limited number of individuals constituting one of the several communities of a certain class of the Varna? To give a conclusive answer to all these questions is extremely difficult. They become the more difficult of solution, considering the difference in the customs prevailing in

different parts of the country—nay, as we find even in the same part of the country such a wide divergence of customs among different castes and families

Then what is to be?

What we should have is what we have not, perhaps what our forefathers even had not—that which the Yavanas had, that, impelled by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe, the electric flow of that tremendous power, vivifying the whole world. We want that. We want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-reliance, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward; and we want—that intense spirit of activity (Rajas) which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot.

What can be a greater giver of peace than renunciation? A little ephemeral worldly good is nothing in comparison with eternal good; no doubt of that. What can bring greater strength than Sattva Guna (absolute purity of mind)? It is indeed true that all other kinds of knowledge are but non-knowledge in comparison with Self-knowledge, but I ask—how many are there in the world fortunate enough to gain that Sattva Guna? How many in this land of Bharata? How many have that noble heroism which can renounce all, shaking off the idea of “I and mine”? How many are blessed enough to possess that far-sight of wisdom which makes the earthly pleasures appear to be but vanity of vanities? Where is that broad-hearted man who is apt to forget even his own body in meditating over the beauty and glory of the Divine? Those who are such are but a handful in comparison to the population of the whole of India, and in order that these men may attain to their salvation, will the millions and

millions of men and women of India have to be crushed under the wheel of the present-day society and religion?

And what good can come out of such a crushing?

Do you not see—taking up this plea of Sattva, the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas, or dark ignorance? Where the most dull want to hide their stupidity by covering it with a false desire for the Highest Knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one, born and bred in life-long laziness, wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to make their cruelty appear under the cloak of austerity, as a part of religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but everyone is ready to lay the whole blame on others; where knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius consists in chewing the cud of others' thoughts, and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors: do we require any other proof to show that that country is being day by day drowned in utter Tamas?

Therefore, Sattva, or absolute purity, is now far away from us. Those amongst us who are not yet fit, but who hope to be fit, to reach to that absolutely pure Paramahansa state—for them, the acquirement of Rajas, or intense activity, is what is most beneficial now. Unless a man passes through Rajas, can he ever attain to that perfect Sâttvika state? How can one expect Yoga, or union with God, unless one has previously finished with his thirst for Bhoga, or enjoyment? How can renunciation come where there is no Vairâgyam, or dispassion for all the charms of enjoyment?

On the other hand, the quality of Rajas is apt to die down as soon as it comes up, like a fire of palm leaves. The presence of Sattva and the Nitya, or Eternal Reality, is almost in a state of juxtaposition—Sattva is nearly Nitya. Whereas the nation in which the quality of Rajas

predominates is not so long-lived, but a nation with a preponderance of Sattva is, as it were, immortal. History is a witness to this fact.

In India, the quality of Rajas is almost absent ; the same is the case with Sattva in the West. It is certain, therefore, that the real life of the Western world depends upon the influx, from India, of the current of Sattva or transcendentalism ; and it is also certain that unless we overpower and submerge our Tamas by the opposite tide of Rajas, we shall never gain any worldly good or welfare in this life, and it is also equally certain that we shall meet many formidable obstacles in the path of realisation of those noble aspirations and ideals connected with our after-life.

The one end and aim of the "Udbodhana" is to help the union and intermingling of these two forces, as far as it lies in its power.

True, in so doing there is a great danger—lest by this huge wave of Western spirit, are washed away all our most precious jewels, earned through ages of hard labour ; true, there is fear lest falling into its strong whirlpool, even the land of Bharata forgets itself so far as to be turned into a battle-field in the struggle after earthly enjoyments,—aye, there is fear too, lest going to imitate the impossible and impracticable foreign ways, rooting out as they do our national customs and ideals—we lose all that we hold dear in this life and be undone in the next !

To avoid these calamities we must always keep the wealth of our own home before our eyes, so that every one down to the masses may always know and see what his own ancestral property is, we must exert ourselves to do that, and side by side, we should be brave to open our doors to receive all available light from outside. Let rays of light come in, in sharp-driving showers from the four quarters of the earth, let the intense flood of light flow in from the West—what of that ? Whatever is weak



and corrupt is liable to die—what are we to do with it? If it goes, let it go, what harm does it do to us? What is strong and invigorating, is immortal. Who can destroy that?

How many gushing springs and roaring cataracts, how many icy rivulets and ever-flowing streamlets, issuing from the eternal snow-capped peaks of the Himâlayas, combine and flow together to form the gigantic river of the gods, the Ganges, and rush impetuously towards the ocean! So, what a variety of thoughts and ideas, how many currents of forces, issuing from innumerable saintly hearts, and from brains of geniuses of various lands have already enveloped India, the land of Karma, the arena for the display of higher human activities! Look! how under the dominion of the English, in these days of electricity, railroad and steamboat, various sentiments, manners, customs and morals are spreading all over the land with lightning speed. Nectar is coming, and along with it, also poison, good is coming, as well as evil. There has been enough of angry opposition and bloodshed, the power of stemming this tide is not in Hindu society. Everything, from water filtered by machinery and drawn from hydrants, down to sugar purified with bone-ash, is being quietly and freely taken by almost every one, in spite of much show of verbal protest. Slowly and slowly, by the strong dint of law, many of our most cherished customs are day by day falling off—we have no power to withstand that. And why is there no power? Is truth really powerless? “Truth alone conquers and not falsehood”—Is this Divine Vedic saying false? Or who knows but that those very customs which are being swept away by the deluge of the power of Western sovereignty or of Western education were not real Achâras, but were Anâchâras, after all. This also is a matter for serious consideration.

बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय—“For the good of the many, as

well as for the happiness of the many," in an unselfish manner, with a heart filled with love and reverence, the "Udbodhana" invites all wise and large-hearted men who love their motherland to discuss these points, and solve these problems, and being devoid of the feeling of hatred or antagonism, as well as turning itself away from the infliction of abusive language directed towards any individual, or society, or any sect, it offers its whole self for the service of all classes

To work we have the right, the result is in the hands of the Lord We only pray—"O Thou Eternal Spirit, make us spiritual; O Thou Eternal Strength, make us strong, O Thou Mighty One, make us mighty "

---

## RAMAKRISHNA: HIS LIFE AND SAYINGS<sup>1</sup>

Among the Sanskrit scholars of the West, Professor Max Müller takes the lead. The Rig Veda Samhitâ, the whole of which no one could even get at before, is now very neatly printed and made accessible to the public, thanks to the munificent generosity of the East India Company, and to the Professor's prodigious labours extending over years. The alphabetical characters of most of the manuscripts, collected from different parts of India, are of various forms, and many words in them are inaccurate. We cannot easily comprehend how difficult it is for a foreigner, however learned he may be, to find out the accuracy or inaccuracy of these Sanskrit characters, and more especially to make out clearly the meaning of an extremely condensed and complicated commentary. In the life of Professor Max Müller, the publication of the Rig Veda is a great event. Besides this, he has been dwelling, as it were, and spending his whole lifetime, amidst ancient Sanskrit literature; but notwithstanding this, it does not imply that in the Professor's imagination India is still echoing as of old with Vedic hymns, with her sky clouded with sacrificial smoke, with many a Vashistha, Vishvâmitra, Janaka and Yâjnavalkya, with her every home blooming with a Gârgi or a Maitreyi, and herself guided by the Vedic rules or canons of Grihya Sutra.

The Professor, with ever-watchful eyes, keeps himself well-informed of what new events are occurring even in the out-of-the-way corners of modern India, half-dead as she is, trodden down by the feet of the foreigner professing an alien religion, and all but bereft of her ancient

<sup>1</sup> Translation of a review of "Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings" by Prof Max Müller, contributed to the *Udbodhana*, 14th March, 1899

manners, rites and customs As the Professor's feet never touched these shores, many Anglo-Indians here show an unmixed contempt for his opinions on the customs, manners and codes of morality of the Indian people. But they ought to know that, even after their life-long stay, or even if they were born and brought up in this country, except any particular information they may obtain about that stratum of society with which they come in direct contact, the Anglo-Indian authorities have to remain quite ignorant in respect of other classes of people, and the more so, when, of this vast society divided into so many castes, it is very hard even among themselves for one caste to properly know the manners and peculiarities of another

Sometime ago, in a book, named, "Residence in India," written by a well-known Anglo-Indian officer, I came across such a chapter as "Native Zenana Secrets" Perhaps because of that strong desire in every human heart for knowledge of secrets, I read the chapter, but only to find that this big Anglo-Indian author is fully bent upon satisfying the intense curiosity of his own countrymen regarding the mystery of a native's life by describing an *affaire d'amour*, said to have transpired between his sweeper, the sweeper's wife and her paramour! And from the cordial reception given to the book by the Anglo-Indian community, it seems the writer's object has been gained, and he feels himself quite satisfied with his work. "God-speed to you, dear friends!"—What else shall we say? Well has the Lord said in the Gita—

ध्यायती विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्सजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

"Thinking of objects, attachment to them is formed in a man From attachment longing, and from longing anger grows "

Let such irrelevant things alone To return to our subject After all, one wonders at Professor Max

Muller's knowledge of the social customs and codes of law, as well as the contemporaneous occurrences in the various provinces of present-day India, this is borne out by our own personal experiences

In particular, the Professor observes with a keen eye what new waves of religion are rising in different parts of India, and spares no pains in letting the Western world not remain in the dark about them. The Brâhmo Samâj guided by Debendranâth Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen, the Arya Samaj established by Swami Dayânanda Sarasvatî, and the Theosophical movement—have all come under the praise or censure of his pen. Struck by the sayings and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna published in the two well-established journals, the *Brahmavâdin* and the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and reading what the Brahmo preacher, Mr Pratâp Chandra Mazumdar, wrote about Sri Ramakrishna,<sup>1</sup> he was attracted by the Sage's life. Sometime ago, a short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life<sup>2</sup> also appeared in the well-known monthly journal of England, *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, contributed by Mr C H Tawney, M A, the distinguished librarian of the India House. Gathering a good deal of information from Madras and Calcutta, the Professor discussed Sri Ramakrishna's life and his teachings in a short article<sup>3</sup> in the foremost monthly English journal, the *Nineteenth Century*. There he expressed himself to the effect, that this new Sage easily won his heart by the originality of his thoughts, couched in novel language and impregnate with fresh spiritual power, which he infused into India, when she was merely echoing the thoughts of her ancient sages, for several centuries past, or, as in recent times, those of Western scholars. He, the

<sup>1</sup> "Paramahansa Sreemat Ramakrishna" *Theistic Quarterly Review*, October, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> "A Modern Hindu Saint." January, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> "A Real Mahâtman"

Professor, had read often India's religious literature, and thereby well acquainted himself with the life-stories of many of her ancient sages and saints, but, is it possible to expect such lives again, in this age in this India of modern times? Ramakrishna's life was a reply in the affirmative to such a question. And it brought new life, by sprinkling water, as it were, at the root of the creeper of hope regarding India's future greatness and progress, in the heart of this great-souled scholar, whose whole life has been dedicated to her.

There are certain great souls in the West who sincerely desire the good of India, but we are not aware whether Europe can point out another well-wisher of India who feels more for India's well-being than Professor Max Müller. Not only is Max Müller a well-wisher of India, but he has also a strong faith in Indian Philosophy and Indian Religion. That Advaitism is the highest discovery in the domain of religion, the Professor has many times publicly admitted. That doctrine of reincarnation which is a dread to the Christian who has identified the soul with the body, he firmly believes in, because of his having found conclusive proof in his own personal experience. And what more, perhaps, his previous birth was in India, and lest by coming to India, the old frame may break down under the violent rush of a suddenly aroused mass of past recollections—is the fear in his mind that now stands foremost in the way of his visit to this country. Still, as a worldly man, whoever he may be, he has to look to all sides and conduct himself accordingly. When, after a complete surrender of all worldly interests, even the Sannyâsin, when performing any practices which he knows to be purest in themselves, is seen to shiver in fear of public opinion, simply because they are held with disapproval by the people among whom he lives, when the consideration of gaining name and fame and high position, and the fear of losing them,

regulate the actions of even the greatest ascetic, though he may verbally denounce such considerations as most filthy and detestable—what wonder then that the man of the world who is universally honoured, and is ever anxious not to incur the displeasure of society, will have to be very cautious in ventilating the views which he personally cherishes. It is not a fact that the Professor is an utter disbeliever in such subtle subjects as the mysterious 'psychic powers of the Yogis.

"It is not many years since," Professor Max Müller "felt called upon to say a few words on certain religious movements, now going on in India"—"which has often and not unjustly, been called a country of philosophers,"—which seemed to him "to have been very much misrepresented and misunderstood at home " In order to remove such misconceptions and to protest against "the wild and overcharged accounts of Saints and Sages living and teaching at present in India, which had been published and scattered broadcast in Indian, American, and English papers," and "to show at the same time that behind such strange names as Indian Theosophy, and Esoteric Buddhism and all the rest, there was something real, something worth knowing"—or in other words, to point out to the thoughtful section of Europe, that India was not a land inhabited only by "quite a new race of human beings, who had gone through a number of the most fearful ascetic exercises," to carry on a lucrative profession, by thus acquiring the powers of working such "very silly miracles" as flying through the air like the feathered race, walking on, or living fishlike under the water, healing all sorts of maladies by means of incantations, and by the aid of occult arts, fabricating gold, silver or diamond from baser materials, or by the power of Siddhis bestowing sturdy sons to rich families—but that men, who had actually realised in their life great transcendental truths, who were real knowers of Brahman, true Yogins,

real devotees of God, were never found wanting in India—and, above all, to show that the whole Aryan population of India had not as yet come down so low as to be on the same plane as the brute creation, that, rejecting the latter, the living Gods in human shape, they, “the high and the low,” were, day and night, busy licking the feet of the first-mentioned performers of silly juggleries,—Professor Max Muller presented Sri Ramakrishna’s life to the learned European public, in an article entitled “A Real Mahâtman,” which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* in its August number, 1896

The learned people of Europe and America read the article with great interest and many have been attracted towards its subject, Sri Ramakrishna Deva,—with the result that the wrong ideas of the civilised West about India as a country full of naked, infanticidal, ignorant, cowardly race of men who were cannibals, and little removed from beasts, who forcibly burnt their widows, and were steeped in all sorts of sin and darkness—towards the formation of which ideas, the Christian missionaries and, I am as much ashamed as pained to confess, some of my own countrymen also have been chiefly instrumental—began to be corrected. The veil of the gloom of ignorance, which was spread across the eyes of the Western people by the strenuous efforts of these two bodies of men, has been slowly and slowly rending asunder. Can the country that has produced a great world-teacher like Sri Bhagavân Ramakrishna Deva, be really full of such abominations as we have been asked to believe in? or, have we been all along duped by interested organised bodies of mischief-makers, and kept in utter obscurity and error about the real India?—Such a question naturally arises in the Western mind.

When Professor Max Muller, who occupies in the West the first rank in the field of Indian religion, philosophy and literature, published with a devoted heart a



short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life, in the *Nineteenth Century*, for the benefit of Europeans and Americans, it is needless to say that bitter feeling of burning rancour made its appearance amongst those two classes of people referred to above.

By improper representation of the Hindu gods and goddesses, the Christian missionaries were trying with all their heart and soul to prove that really religious men could never be produced from among their worshippers, but like a straw before a tidal wave, that attempt was swept away, while that class of our countrymen alluded to above, which set itself to devise means for quenching the great fire of the rapidly spreading power of Sri Ramakrishna, seeing all its efforts futile, has yielded to despair. What is human will in opposition to the Divine?

Of course from both sides, unintermittent volleys of fierce attack were opened on the aged Professor's devoted head, the old veteran, however, was not the one to turn his back. He had triumphed many times in similar contests. This time, also, he has passed the trial with equal ease. And to stop the empty shouts of his inferior opponents, he has published, by way of a warning to them, the book, *Ramakrishna, His Life and Sayings*, in which he has collected more complete information, and given a fuller account of his life and utterances, so that the reading public may get a better knowledge of this great Sage and his religious ideas—the Sage, “who has lately obtained considerable celebrity, both in India and America, where his disciples have been actively engaged in preaching his gospel and winning converts to his doctrines, even among Christian audiences.” The Professor adds: “This may seem very strange, nay, almost incredible to us

Yet every human heart has its religious yearnings, it has a hunger for religion, which sooner or later wants to be satisfied. Now the religion taught by the disciples of Ramakrishna comes to these

hungry souls, without any outward authority," and is, therefore, welcomed as the "free elixir of life" . . . "Hence, though there may be some exaggeration in the number of those who are stated to have become converted to the religion of Ramakrishna . there can be no doubt that a religion which can achieve such successes in our time, while it calls itself with perfect truth the oldest religion and philosophy of the world, *viz* , the Vedanta, the end or highest object of the Vedas, deserves our careful attention "

After discussing, in the first part of the book, what is meant by the Mahatman, the Four Stages of Life, Ascetic Exercises, or Yoga, and after making some mention about Dayananda Sarasvati, Pavhârî Bâbâ, Debendranath Tagore and Rai Sâhgrâm Sâheb Bahadur, the leader of the Râdhâswâmî sect, the Professor enters on Sri Ramakrishna's life.

The Professor greatly fears lest the Dialogic Process—the transformation produced in the description of the facts as they really happened, by too much favourableness or unfavourableness of the narrator towards them—which is invariably at work in all history as a matter of inevitable course, also influences this present sketch of life. Hence his unusual carefulness about the collection of facts. The present writer is an insignificant servant of Sri Ramakrishna. Though the materials gathered by him for Ramakrishna's life have been well-pounded in the mortar of the Professor's logic and impartial judgment, still he (Max Muller) has not omitted to add that there may be possible "traces of what I call the Dialogic Process and the irrepressible miraculising tendencies of devoted disciples," even in "his unvarnished description of his Master " And, no doubt, those few harsh-sweet words, which the Professor has said, in the course of his reply to what some people, with the Brâhmo-Dharma preacher, the Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, at their head, wrote

to him, in their anxiety to make out a "not edifying side" of Ramakrishna's character, demand thoughtful consideration from those amongst us of Bengal, who being full of jealousy can, with difficulty, bear the sight of others' weal.

SRI Ramakrishna's life is presented in the book in very brief and simple language. In this life, every word of the wary historian is weighed, as it were, before being put on paper ; those sparks of fire, which are seen here and there, to shoot forth in the article, "A Real Mahâtman," are, this time, held in with the greatest care. The Professor's boat is here plying between the Scylla of the Christian missionaries on the one hand, and the Charybdis of the tumultuous Brahmos on the other. The article, "A Real Mahâtman" brought forth from both the parties many hard words and many carping remarks on the Professor. It is a pleasure to observe that there is neither the attempt made here to retort on them, nor is there any display of meanness—as the refined writers of England are not in the habit of indulging in that kind of thing—but with a sober, dignified, never-the-least malignant, yet firm and thundering, voice, worthy of the aged scholar, he has removed the charges that were levelled against some of the out-of-the-common ideas of the great-souled Sage—swelling forth from a heart too deep for ordinary grasp.

And the charges are, indeed, surprising to us. We have heard the great Minister of the Brahmo Samaj, the late revered Achârya, SRI Keshab Chandra Sen, speaking in his charming way, that SRI Ramakrishna's simple, sweet, colloquial language breathed a superhuman purity, though in his speech could be noticed some such words as we term obscene, the use of those words, on account of his uncommon child-like innocence and of their being perfectly devoid of the least breath of sensualism, instead of being something reproachable, served rather the purpose of embellishment—yet, this is one of the mighty charges!

Another charge brought against him is that his treat-

ment of his wife was barbarous, because of his taking the vow of leading a Sannyasin's life! To this, the Professor has replied that he took the vow of Sannyasa with his wife's assent, and that during the years of his life on this earth, his wife, bearing a character worthy of her husband, heartily received him as her Guru (spiritual guide) and, according to his instructions, passed her days in infinite bliss and peace, being engaged in the service of God as a lifelong Brahmachârini Besides, he asks, "Is love between husband and wife really impossible without the procreation of children?" "We must learn to believe in Hindu honesty"—in the matter that, without having any physical relationship, a Brahmachari husband can live a life of crystal purity, thus making his Brahmacharini wife a partner in the immortal bliss of the highest spiritual realisation, Brahmânandam—"however incredulous we might justly be on such matters in our own country." May blessings shower on the Professor for such worthy remarks! Even he, born of a foreign nationality and living in a foreign land, can understand the meaning of our Brahmacharya, as the only way to the attainment of spirituality, and believes that it is not, even in these days, rare in India, whilst the hypocritical heroes of our own household are unable to see anything else than carnal relationship in the matrimonial union! "As a man thinketh in his mind, so he seeth outside "

Again another charge put forward is that "he did not show sufficient moral abhorrence of prostitutes " To this, the Professor's rejoinder is very, very sweet, indeed, he says that in this charge Ramakrishna "does not stand quite alone among the founders of religion!" Ah! How sweet are these words—they remind one of the prostitute Ambâwali, the object of Lord Buddha's divine grace, and of the Samaritan woman, who won the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet again, another charge is that he did not hate

those who were intemperate in their habits. Heaven save the mark! One must not tread even on the shadow of a man, because he took a sip or two of drink—is not that the meaning? A formidable accusation, indeed! Why did not the Mahâpurusha kick away and drive off in disgust the drunkards, the prostitutes, the thieves, and all the sinners of the world! And why did he not, with eyes closed, talk in a set drawl after the never-to-be-varied tone of the Indian flute-player, or talk in conventional language concealing his thoughts! And above all, the crowning charge is why did he not “live *maritalement*” all his life!

Unless life can be framed after the ideal of such strange purity and good manners as set forth by the accusers, India is doomed to go to ruin. Let her, if she has to rise by the help of such ethical rules!

The greater portion of the book has been devoted to the collection of the sayings, rather than to the life itself. That those sayings have attracted the attention of many of the English-speaking readers throughout the world, can be easily inferred from the rapid sale of the book. The sayings, falling direct from his holy lips, are impregnate with the strongest spiritual force and power; and therefore they will surely exert their divine influence in every part of the world. “For the good of the many, for the happiness of the many,” great-souled men take their birth; their lives and works are past the ordinary human run, and the method of their preaching is equally marvellous.

And what are we doing? The son of a poor Brâhmana, who has sanctified us by his birth, raised us by his work, and has turned the sympathy of the conquering race towards us by his immortal sayings—what are we doing for him? Truth is not always palatable, still there are times when it has to be told—some of us do understand that his life and teachings are to our gain, but there the matter ends. It is beyond our power even to make an attempt to put those precepts into practice in our own

lives, far less to consign our whole body and soul to the huge waves of harmony of Jñâna and Bhakti that Sri Ramakrishna has raised. This play of the Lord, those who have understood, or are trying to understand, to them we say "What will mere understanding do? The proof of understanding is in work. Will others believe you, if it ends only in verbal expressions of assurance, or is put forward as a matter of personal faith? Work argues what it feels, work out what you feel and let the world see." All ideas and feelings coming out of the fulness of the heart are known by their fruits—practical works.

Those who knowing themselves very learned think lightly of this unlettered, poor, ordinary temple-priest, to them our humble prayer is: "Of which country, one illiterate temple-priest, by virtue of his own strength, has in so short a time caused the victory of the ancient Sanâtana Dharma of your forefathers to resound even in lands far beyond the seas—of that country, you are the heroes of heroes, the honoured of all, mighty, well-bred, the learned of the learned—how much therefore must you be able to perform far more uncommon, heroic deeds for the welfare of your own land and nation, if you but will it! Arise, therefore, come forward, display the play of your superior power within, manifest it, and we are standing with offerings of deepest veneration in hand ready to worship you. We are ignorant, poor, unknown and insignificant beggars with only the beggar's garb as a means of livelihood, whereas you are supreme in riches and influence, of mighty power, born of noble descent, centres of all knowledge and learning! Why not rouse yourselves? Why not take the lead? Show the way, show us that example of perfect renunciation for the good of the world and we will follow you like bond-slaves!"

On the other hand, those who are showing unjustified signs of causeless, rancorous hostilities, out of absolute malice and envy—natural to a slavish race—at the success

and the celebrity of Sri Ramakrishna and his name—to them we say “Dear friends, vain are these efforts of yours! If this infinite, unbounded, religious wave that has engulfed in its depths the very ends of space—on whose snow-white crest shineth this Divine Form, in the august glow of a heavenly presence—if this be the effect brought about by our eager endeavours in pursuit of personal name, fame, or wealth, then, without your or any others’ efforts, this wave shall, in obedience to the insuperable Law of the Universe, soon die in the infinite womb of Time, never to rise again! ‘But if, again, this tide, in accordance with the Will, and under the divine inspiration of the One Universal Mother, has begun to deluge the world with the flood of the unselfish love of a Great Man’s heart, then, O feeble man, what power dost thou possess that thou shouldst thwart the onward progress of the Almighty Mother’s Will?’”

---

## THE PARIS CONGRESS OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS<sup>1</sup>

In the Paris Exhibition, the Congress of the History of Religions recently sat for several days together. At the Congress, there was no room allowed for the discussions on the doctrines and spiritual views of any religion, its purpose was only to enquire into the historic evolution of the different forms of established faiths, and along with it other accompanying facts that are incidental to it. Accordingly, the representation of the various missionary sects of different religions and their beliefs was entirely left out of account in this Congress. The Chicago Parliament of Religions was a grand affair and the representatives of many religious sects from all parts of the world were present at it. This Congress, on the other hand, was attended only by such scholars as devote themselves to the study of the origin and the history of different religions. At the Chicago Parliament the influence of the Roman Catholics was great, and they organised it with great hopes for their sect. The Roman Catholics expected to establish their superiority over the Protestants without much opposition, by proclaiming their glory and strength and laying the bright side of their faith before the assembled Christians, Hindus, Bauddhas, Mussalmans and other representatives of the world-religions and publicly exposing their weakness, they hoped to make firm their own position. But the result proving otherwise, the Christian world has been deplorably hopeless of the reconciliation of the different religious systems so the Roman Catholics are now particularly opposed to the repetition of any such

<sup>1</sup> Translated from a Paris letter written to the *Udbodhana*.



gathering. France is a Roman Catholic country ; hence, in spite of the earnest wish of the authorities, no religious congress was convened on account of the vehement opposition on the part of the Roman Catholic world

The Congress of the History of Religions at Paris was like the Congress of Orientalists, which is convened from time to time, and at which European scholars, versed in Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic and other Oriental languages, meet ; only the antiquarianism of Christianity was added to this Paris Congress

From Asia, only three Japanese pundits were present at the Congress. From India, there was the Swami Vivekananda

The conviction of many of the Sanskrit scholars of the West is that the Vedic religion is the outcome of the worship of the fire, the sun and other awe-inspiring objects of natural phenomena

Swami Vivekananda was invited by the Paris Congress to contradict this conviction, and he promised to read a paper on the subject. But he could not keep his promise on account of ill-health, and with difficulty was only able to be personally present at the Congress, where he was most warmly received by all the Western Sanskrit scholars, whose admiration for the Swami was all the greater as they had already gone through many of his lectures on the Vedanta.

At the Congress, Mr. Gustav Oppert, a German pundit, read a paper on the origin of the Sâlagrâma-Silâ. He traced the origin of the Salagrama worship to that of the emblem of the female generative principle. According to him, the Siva-Lingam is the phallic emblem of the male, and the Salagrama of the female, generative principle. And thus he wanted to establish that the worship of the Siva-Linga and that of the Salagrama—both are but the component parts of the worship of Lingam and Yoni !

The Swami repudiated the above two views and said

that though he had heard of such ridiculous explanations about the Siva-Lingam, the other theory of the Salagrama-Sila was quite new and strange, and seemed groundless to him.

The Swami said that the worship of the Siva-Lingam originated from the famous hymn in the Atharva Veda Samhitâ sung in praise of the Yupa-Stambha, the sacrificial post. In that hymn, a description is found of the beginningless and endless Stambha, or Skambha, and it is shown that the said Skambha is put in place of the eternal Brahman. As, afterwards, the Yajna (sacrificial) fire, its smoke, ashes and flames, the Soma plant, and the ox that used to carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifice, gave place to the conceptions of the brightness of Siva's body, his tawny matted-hair, his blue throat, and the riding on the bull of the Siva, and so on—just so, the Yupa-Skambha gave place in time to the Siva-Lingam, and was deified to the high Devahood of Sri Sankara. In the Atharva Veda Samhita, the sacrificial cakes are also extolled along with the attributes of the Brahman.

In the Linga Purâna, the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great Stambha and the superiority of Mahâdeva.

Again, there is another fact to be considered. The Bauddhas used to erect memorial topes consecrated to the memory of Buddha, and the very poor, who were unable to build big monuments, used to express their devotion to him by dedicating miniature substitutes for them. Similar instances are still seen in the case of Hindu temples in Benares and other sacred places of India, where those who cannot afford to build temples, dedicate very small temple-like constructions instead. So, it might be quite probable that during the period of Buddhistic ascendancy, the rich Hindus, in imitation of the Bauddhas, used to erect something as a memorial resembling their Skambha, and the poor in a similar manner copied them on a reduced scale,

and, afterwards, the miniature memorials of the poor Hindus became a new addition to the Skambha

One of the names of the Bauddha Stupas (memorial topes) is, Dhâtu-garbha, that is, "metal-wombed." Within the Dhatu-garbha, in small cases made of stone shaped like the present Salagrama, used to be preserved the ashes, bones and other remains of the distinguished Bauddha Bhikshus, along with gold, silver and other metals. The Salagrama-Silas are natural stones resembling in form these artificially-cut stone-cases of the Bauddha Dhatu-garbha, and, thus being first worshipped by the Bauddhas, gradually got into Vaishnavism, like many other forms of Buddhistic worship that found their way into Hinduism. On the banks of the Narmadâ and in Nepal, the Buddhistic influence lasted longer than in other parts of India, and the remarkable coincidence, that the Narmadesvara Siva-Lingam found on the banks of the Narmadâ and hence so called, and the Salagrama-Silas of Nepal, are given preference to by the Hindus to those found elsewhere in India, is a fact that ought to be considered with respect to this point of contention.

The explanation of the Salagrama-Sila as a phallic emblem was an imaginary invention and, from the very beginning, beside the mark. The explanation of the Siva-Lingam as a phallic emblem was brought forward by the most thoughtless, and was forthcoming in India in her most degraded times, those of the downfall of Buddhism. The filthiest Tântrika literature of Buddhism of those times is yet largely found and practised in Nepal and Thibet.

The Swami gave another lecture in which he dwelt on the historic evolution of the religious ideas in India, and said that the Vedas are the common source of Hinduism in all its varied stages, as also Buddhism and every other religious belief in India. The seeds of the multifarious growth of Indian thought on religion lie buried in the Vedas. Buddhism and the rest of India's religious thought

are the outcome of the unfolding and expansion of those seeds, and modern Hinduism also is only their developed and matured form. With the expansion or the contraction of society, those seeds lie more or less expanded at one place or more or less contracted at another.

He said a few words about the priority of Sri Krishna to Buddha. He also told the Western scholars that as the histories of the royal dynasties described in the Vishnu Purana were by degrees being admitted as proofs throwing light on the ways of research of the antiquarian, so, he said, the traditions of India were all true, and desired that Western Sanskrit scholars, instead of writing fanciful articles, should try to discover their hidden truths

Professor Max Muller says in one of his books that, whatever similarities there may be, unless it be demonstrated that some one Greek knew Sanskrit, it cannot be concluded that ancient India helped ancient Greece in any way. But it is curious to observe that some Western savants, finding several terms of Indian Astronomy similar to those of Greek Astronomy, and coming to know that the Greeks founded a small kingdom on the borders of India, can clearly read the help of Greece on everything Indian, on Indian literature, Indian Astronomy, Indian Arithmetic. Not only so; one has been bold enough to go so far as to declare that all Indian sciences as a rule are but echoes of the Greek!

On a single Sanskrit Sloka,—*यज्ञं वे यवनाः तेषु षण्ण विद्या प्रतिष्ठिता । ऋषिषत् तेषु पूज्यन्ते* —“The Yavanas are Mlechchhas, in them this science is established, (therefore) even they deserve worship like Rishis, ”—how much the Westerners have indulged their unrestrained imagination! But it remains to be shown how the above Sloka goes to prove that the Aryans were taught by the Mlechchhas. The meaning may be that the learning of the Mlechchha disciples of the Aryan teachers is praised

here, only to encourage the Mlechchhas in their pursuit of the Aryan Science

Secondly, when the germ of every Aryan Science is found in the Vedas and every step of any of those sciences can be traced with exactness from the Vedic to the present day, what is the necessity for forcing the far-fetched suggestion of the Greek influence on them? "What is the use of going to the hills in search of honey, if it is available at home?" as a Sanskrit proverb says.

Again, every Greek-like word of Aryan Astronomy can be easily derived from Sanskrit roots. The Swami could not understand what right the Western scholars had to trace those words to a Greek source, thus ignoring their direct etymology.

In the same manner, if on finding mention of the word Yavanikâ (curtain), in the dramas of Kâlidâsa and other Indian poets, the Yavanika (Ionian or Greek) influence on the whole of the dramatic literature of the time is ascertained, then one should first stop to compare whether the Aryan dramas are at all like the Greek. Those who have studied the mode of action and style of the dramas of both the languages must have to admit that any such likeness, if found, is only a fancy of the obstinate dreamer, and has never any real existence as a matter of fact. Where is that Greek chorus? The Greek Yavanika is on one side of the stage, the Aryan, diametrically on the other. The characteristic manner of expression of the Greek drama is one thing, that of the Aryan quite another. There is not the least likeness between the Aryan and the Greek dramas, rather the dramas of Shakespeare resemble to a great extent the dramas of India. So the conclusion may also be drawn that Shakespeare is indebted to Kalidasa and other ancient Indian dramatists for all his writings, and that the whole Western literature is only an imitation of the Indian.

Lastly, turning Professor Max Müller's own premises

against him, it may be said as well that until it is demonstrated that some one Hindu knew Greek some time, one ought not to talk even of Greek influence.

Likewise, to see Greek influence in Indian Sculpture is also entirely unfounded.

The Swami also said that the worship of Sri Krishna is much older than that of Buddha, and if the Gita be not of the same date as the Mahâbhârata, it is surely much earlier, and by no means later. The style of language of the Gita is the same as that of the Mahabharata. Most of the adjectives used in the Gita to explain matters spiritual are used in the Vana and other Parvas of the Mahabharata, respecting matters temporal. Such coincidence is impossible without the most general and free use of those words at one and the same time. Again, the line of thought in the Gita is the same as in the Mahabharata, and when the Gita notices the doctrines of all the religious sects of the time, why does it not ever mention the name of Buddhism?

In spite of the most cautious efforts of the writers subsequent to Buddha, reference to Buddhism is not withheld and appears somewhere or other, in some shape or other, in histories, stories, essays and every book of the post-Buddhistic literature. In covert or overt ways, some allusion is sure to be met with in reference to Buddha and Buddhism. Can any one show any such reference in the Gita? Again, the Gita is an attempt at the reconciliation of all religious creeds, none of which is slighted in it. Why, it remains to be answered, is Buddhism alone denied the tender touch of the Gita-writer?

The Gita wilfully scorns none. Fear?—Of that there is a conspicuous absence in it. The Lord Himself being the interpreter and the establisher of the Vedas, never hesitates to even censure Vaidika rash presumptuousness, if required,—why then should He fear Buddhism?

As Western scholars devote their whole life to one

Greek work, let them likewise devote their whole life to one Sanskrit work, and much light will flow to the world thereby. The Mahabharata especially is the most invaluable work in Indian history, and it is not too much to say that this book has not as yet been even properly read by the Westerners.

After the lecture, many present expressed their opinions, for or against the subject, and declared that they agreed with most of what the Swami had said, and assured the Swami that the old days of Sanskrit Antiquarianism were past and gone. The views of modern Sanskrit scholars were largely the same as those of the Swami's, they said. They believed also, that there was much true history in the Puranas and the traditions of India.

Lastly, the learned President, admitting all other points of the Swami's lecture, disagreed on one point only, namely, on the contemporaneousness of the Gita with the Mahabharata. But the only reason he adduced was that the Western scholars were mostly of the opinion that the Gita was not a part of the Mahabharata.

The substance of the lecture will be printed in French in the General Report of the Congress

---

## KNOWLEDGE: ITS SOURCE AND ACQUIREMENT<sup>1</sup>

Various have been the theories propounded as regards the primitive source of knowledge. We read in the Upanishads that Brahma, who was the first and the foremost among the Devas, held the key to all knowledge, which he revealed to his disciples and which, being handed down in succession, has been bequeathed as a legacy to the subsequent age. According to the Jains, during an indefinite period of a cycle of Time, which comprises between one thousand and two thousand billions of "oceans" of years, are born some extraordinary, great, perfected beings, whom they call Jinas, and through them the door to knowledge is now and then opened to human society. Likewise Buddhism believes in, and expects at regular intervals, the appearance of the Buddhas, that is, persons possessed of infinite universal wisdom. The same is the reason also of the introduction of Incarnations of God by the Paurânika Hindus, who ascribe to them, along with other missions, the special function of restoring the lost spiritual knowledge by its proper adjustment to the needs of the time. Outside India, we find the great-souled Zoroaster bringing down the light of knowledge from above to the mortal world. So also did Moses, Jesus and Mahomet, who, possessed of Heavenly Authority, proclaim to fallen humanity the tidings of Divine wisdom, in their own unique ways.

Brahma is the name of a high position among the Devas, to which every man can aspire, by virtue of meritorious deeds. Only a selected few can become

<sup>1</sup> Translated from a Bengali contribution by Swami Vivekânanda to the *Udbodhana*, 12th February, 1899



Jinas, while others can never attain to Jinahood, but they can only go so far as to gain the state of Mukti. The state of being a Buddha is open to one and all, without distinction. Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus and Mahomet are great personalities, who incarnated themselves for the fulfilment of some special mission, so also did the incarnations of God mentioned by the Pauranika sages. For others to look up to that seat of these divine personages with a longing eye is madness.

Adam got his knowledge through the tasting of the forbidden fruit. Noah was taught social science by the grace of Jehovah. In India, the theory is that every science has its presiding deity, their founders are either Devas or perfected beings, from the most menial arts as that of a cobbler to the most dignified office of the spiritual guide, everything depends on the kind intervention of the gods or supreme beings. "No knowledge is possible without a teacher." There is no way to the attainment of knowledge, unless it is transmitted through an apostolic succession from disciple to disciple—unless it comes through the mercy of the Guru, and direct from his mouth.

Then again, the Vedantic and other philosophers of the Indian schools hold that knowledge is not to be acquired from without. It is the innate nature of the human soul and the essential birthright of every man. The human soul is the repository of infinite wisdom, what external agency can illuminate it? According to some schools, this infinite wisdom remains always the same and is never lost, and man is not ordinarily conscious of this, because a veil, so to speak, has fallen over it on account of his evil deeds, but as soon as the veil is removed it reveals itself. Others say that this infinite wisdom, though potentially present in a human soul, has become contracted through evil deeds, and it becomes expanded again by the mercy of God,

gained by good deeds We also read in our Scriptures various other methods of unfolding this inborn infinite power and knowledge, such as—devotion to God, performance of work without attachment, practising the eightfold accessories of the Yoga system, or constant dwelling on this knowledge, and so on The final conclusion, however, is this, that through the practice of one, or more, or all of these methods together, man gradually becomes conscious of his inborn real nature, and the infinite power and wisdom within, latent or veiled, becomes at last fully manifest

On the other side, the modern philosophers have analysed the human mind as the source of infinitely possible manifestations, and have come to the conclusion that when the individual mind on the one hand, and favourable time, place and causation on the other, can act and react upon one another, then highly developed consciousness of knowledge is sure to follow Nay, even the unfavourableness of time and place can be successfully surmounted by the vigour and firmness of the individual The strong individual, even if he is thrown amidst the worst conditions of place or time, overcomes them and affirms his own strength Not only so, all the heavy burdens heaped upon the individual, the acting agent, are being made lighter and lighter in the course of time, so that any individual, however weak he may be in the beginning, is sure to reach the goal at the end, if he assiduously applies himself to gain it Look at the uncivilised and ignorant barbarians of the other day! How through close and studious application, they are making long strides into the domains of civilisation, how even those of the lower strata are making their way and are occupying with an irresistible force the most exalted positions in it The sons of cannibal parents are turning out elegant and educated citizens, the descendants of the uncivilised Santals, thanks to the English Government,

have been nowadays meeting in successful competition our Bengali students in the Indian Universities. As such, the partiality of the scientific investigators of the present day to the doctrine of hereditary transmission of qualities is being gradually diminished.

There is a certain class of men whose conviction is that from time eternal there is a treasure of knowledge, which contains the wisdom of *everything* past, present and future. These men hold that it was their own forefathers who had the sole privilege of having the custody of this treasure. The ancient sages, the first possessors of it, bequeathed in succession this treasure and its true import to their descendants only. They are, now, therefore, the only inheritors to it, as such, let the rest of the world worship them.

May we ask these men what they think should be the condition of the other peoples who have not got such forefathers? "Their condition is doomed," is the general answer. The more kind-hearted among them is perchance pleased to rejoin. "Well, let them come and serve us. As a reward for such service, they will be born in our caste, in the next birth. That is the only hope we can hold out to them." "Well, the moderns are making many new and original discoveries in the field of science and arts, which neither you dreamt of, nor is there any proof that your forefathers ever had knowledge of. What do you say to that?" "Why certainly our forefathers knew all these things, the knowledge of which is now unfortunately lost to us. Do you want a proof? I can show you one. Look! Here is the Sanskrit verse." Needless to add that the modern party, who believes in direct evidence only, never attaches any seriousness to such replies and proofs.

Generally, all knowledge is divided into two classes, the Aparâ, secular, and the Parâ, spiritual. One pertains to perishable things, and the other to the realm of the

Spirit There is, no doubt, a great difference between these two classes of knowledge, and the way to the attainment of the one may be entirely different from the way to the attainment of the other. Nor can it be denied that no one method can be pointed out as the sole and universal one, which will serve as the key to all and every door in the domain of knowledge. But, in reality, all this difference is only one of degree and not of kind. It is not that secular and spiritual knowledge are two opposite and contradictory things, but they are the same thing—the same infinite knowledge, which is everywhere fully present, from the lowest atom to the highest Brahman—they are the same knowledge in its different stages of gradual development. This one infinite knowledge we call secular when it is in its lower process of manifestation, and spiritual when it reaches the corresponding higher phase.

“All knowledge is possessed exclusively by some extraordinary great men, and those special personages take birth by the command of God, or in conformity to a higher Law of Nature, or in some preordained order of Karma, except through the agency of these great ones, there is no other way of attaining knowledge.” If such a view be correct and certain, there seems to be no necessity for any individual to strive hard to find any new and original truth—all originality is lost to society for want of exercise and encouragement, and the worst of all is, that society tries to oppose and stop any attempt in the original direction, and thus, the faculty of the initiative dies out. If it is finally settled that the path of human welfare is for ever chalked out by these omniscient men, society naturally fears its own destruction if the least deviation be made from the boundary line of the path, and so it tries to compel all men through rigid laws and threats of punishment to follow that path with unconditional obedience. If society succeeds in imposing such

obedience to itself by confining all men within the narrow groove of these paths, then the destiny of mankind becomes no better than that of a machine. If every act in a man's life has been all previously determined, then what need is there for the culture of the faculty of thought—where is the field for the free play of independent thought and action? In course of time, for want of proper use, all activity is given up, all originality is lost, a sort of Tâmasika dreamy lifelessness hovers over the whole nation, and headlong it goes down and down. The death of such a nation is not far to seek.

On the other hand, if the other extreme were true—that that society prospers the most, which is not guided by the injunctions of such divinely-inspired souls—then, civilisation, wisdom and prosperity, deserting the Chinese, Hindus, Egyptians, Babylonians, Iranians, Greeks, Romans and other great nations of ancient and modern times, who have always followed the path laid down by their sages—would have embraced the Zulus, the Caffrs, the Hot-tentots and the aboriginal tribes of the Andamans and the Australian islands, who have led a life of guideless independence.

Considering all these points, it must be admitted that, though the presence of knowledge everywhere, in every individual, is an eternal truism, yet the path pointed out by the great ones of the earth has the glory peculiar to it, and that there is peculiar interest attached to the transmission of knowledge through the succession of teachers and their disciples. Each of them has its place in the development of the sum total of knowledge; and we must learn to estimate them according to their respective merits. But, perhaps, being carried away by their over-zealous and blind devotion to their Masters, the successors and followers of these great ones sacrifice truth before the altar of devotion and worship to them, and misrepresent the true meaning of the purpose of those great lives, by

insisting on personal worship, that is, they kill the principle for the person

This is also a fact of common experience, that when man himself has lost all his own strength, he naturally likes to pass his days in idle remembrance of his forefathers' greatness. The devoted heart gradually becomes the weakest in its constant attempt to resign itself in every respect to the feet of its ancestors, and at last a time comes when this weakness teaches the disabled yet proud heart to make the vainglory of its ancestors' greatness as the only support of its life. Even if it be true that your ancestors possessed all knowledge, which has, in the efflux of time, been lost to you, it follows, that you, their descendants, must have been instrumental in this disappearance of knowledge, and now it is all the same to you whether you had it or not. To talk of having or losing this already lost knowledge serves no useful purpose at present. You will have to make new efforts, to undergo troubles over again, if you want to recover it.

True, that spiritual illumination shines of itself in a pure heart, and, as such, it is not something acquired from without, but to attain this purity of heart means long struggle and constant practice. It has also been found, on careful enquiry in the sphere of material knowledge, that those higher truths which have now and then been discovered by great scientific men, have flashed like sudden floods of light in their mental atmosphere, which they had only to catch and formulate. But such truths never appear in the mind of an uncultured and wild savage. All these go to prove that hard Tapasyâ, or practice of austerities, in the shape of devout contemplation and constant study of a subject, is at the root of all illumination, in its respective spheres.

What we call extraordinary, superconscious inspiration is only the result of a higher development of ordinary consciousness, gained by long and continued effort. The

difference between the ordinary and the extraordinary is merely one of degree, in manifestation. Conscious efforts lead the way to superconscious illumination.

Infinite perfection is in every man, though unmanifested. Every man has in him the potentiality of attaining to perfect saintliness, Rishihood, or to the most exalted position of an Avatâra, or to the greatness of a hero in material discoveries. It is only a question of time and adequate well-guided investigation, etc., to have this perfection manifested. In a society where once such great men were born, there the possibility of their re-appearance is greater. There can be no doubt that a society with the help of such wise guides advances faster than the one without it. But it is equally certain, that such guides will rise up in the societies that are now without them, and lead them to equally rapid progress in the future.

---

## MODERN INDIA

*(Translated from a Bengali contribution to the  
Udbodhana, March, 1899 )*

The Vedic priests base their superior strength on the knowledge of the sacrificial Mantras <sup>1</sup> By the power of these Mantras, the Devas are made to come down from their heavenly abodes, accept the drink and food offerings and grant the prayers of the Yajamânas <sup>2</sup> The kings as well as their subjects are, therefore, looking up to these priests for their welfare during their earthly life Râjâ Soma<sup>3</sup> is worshipped by the priest and is made to thrive by the power of his Mantras As such, the Devas, whose favourite food is the juice of the Soma plant offered in oblation by the priest, are always kind to him and bestow his desired boons Thus strengthened by divine grace, he defies all human opposition , for, what can the power of mortals do against that of the Gods? Even the king, the centre of all earthly power, is a suppliant at his door A kind look from him is the greatest help , his mere blessing a tribute to the State, pre-eminent above everything else

Now commanding the king to be engaged in affairs fraught with death and ruin, now standing by him as his fastest friend with kind and wise counsels, now spreading the net of subtle, diplomatic statesmanship in which the king is easily caught—the priest is seen, oftentimes, to make the royal power totally subservient to him Above

<sup>1</sup> Vedic hymns uttered by the priests to invoke the Devas at the time of Sacrifice

<sup>2</sup> The men who perform Sacrifices

<sup>3</sup> The name of the Soma plant as commonly found in the Vedas The priests offered to the Devas the juice of this plant at the time of Sacrifice



all, the worst fear is in the knowledge that the name and fame of the royal forefathers and of himself and his family lie at the mercy of the priest's pen. He is the historian. The king might have paramount power, attaining a great glory in his reign, he might prove himself as the father and mother in one to his subjects—but if the priest is not appeased—his sun of glory goes down with his last breath, for ever, all his worth and usefulness deserving of universal approbation are lost in the great womb of Time, like unto the fall of gentle dew on the ocean. Others who inaugurated the huge Sacrifices lasting over many years, the performers of the Ashvamedha and so on—those who showered, like incessant rain in the rainy season, countless wealth on the priests—their names, thanks to the grace of priests, are emblazoned in the pages of history. The name of Priyadarsi Dharmâsoka,<sup>1</sup> the beloved of the gods, is nothing but a name in the priestly world, while Janmejaya<sup>2</sup>, son of Parikshit, is a household word in every Hindu family.

To protect the State, to meet the expenses of the personal comforts and luxuries of himself and his long retinue, and, above all, to fill to overflowing the coffers of the all-powerful priesthood for its propitiation, the king is continually draining the resources of his subjects, even as the sun sucks up moisture from the earth. His especial prey—his milch cows—are the Vaisyas.

Neither under the Hindu kings, nor under the Buddhist rule, do we find the common subject-people taking any part in expressing their voice in the affairs of the State. True, Yudhishtira visits the houses of Vaisyas and even Sudras, when he is in Vâranâvata; true, the subjects are praying for the installation of Râmachandra to the regency of Ayodhya, nay, they are even criticising

<sup>1</sup> The name given to the great king, Asoka, after he embraced Buddhism.

<sup>2</sup> The performer of the great snake-sacrifice of Mahâbhârata.

the conduct of Sitâ, and secretly making plans for the bringing about of her exile · but, as a recognised rule of the State they have no direct voice in the supreme Government. The power of the populace is struggling to express itself in indirect and disorderly ways, without any method. The people have not as yet the conscious knowledge of the existence of this power. There is neither the attempt on their part to organise it into a united action, nor have they got the will to do so, there is also a complete absence of that capacity, that skill, by means of which small and incoherent centres of force are united together, creating insuperable strength as their resultant.

Is this due to want of proper laws?—no, that is not it. There are laws, there are methods, separately and distinctly assigned for the guidance of different departments of government, there are laws laid down in the minutest detail for everything, such as the collection of revenue, the management of the army, the administration of justice, punishments and rewards. But, at the root of all, is the injunction of the Rishi—the word of divine authority, the revelation of God coming through the inspired Rishi. The laws have, it can almost be said, no elasticity in them. Under the circumstances, it is never possible for the people to acquire any sort of education, by which they can learn to combine among themselves and be united for the accomplishment of any object for the common good of the people, or by which they can have the concerted intellect to conceive the idea of popular right in the treasures collected by the king from his subjects, or even such education by which they can be fired with the aspiration to gain the right of representation in the control of State revenues and expenditure. Why should they do such things? Is not the inspiration of the Rishi responsible for their prosperity and progress?

Again, all those laws are in books. Between laws as

codified in books and their operation in practical life, there is a world of difference. One Ramachandra is born after thousands of Agnivarnas<sup>1</sup> pass away! Many kings show us the life of Chandâsoka<sup>2</sup>, Dharmasokas are rare! The number of kings like Akbar, in whom the subjects find their life, is far less than that of kings like Aurangzeb, who live on the blood of their people!

Even if the kings be of as godlike nature as that of Yudhishtira, Ramachandra, Dharmasoka or Akbar, under whose benign rule the people enjoyed safety and prosperity, and were looked after with paternal care by their rulers, the hand of him who is always fed by another gradually loses the power of taking the food to his mouth. His power of self-preservation can never become fully manifest, who is always protected in every respect by another. Even the strongest youth remains but a child, if he is always looked after as a child by his parents. Being always governed by kings of godlike nature, to whom is left the whole duty of protecting and providing for the people, they can never get any occasion for understanding the principles of self-government. Such a nation, being entirely dependent on the king for everything and never caring to exert itself for the common good or for self-defence, becomes gradually destitute of inherent energy and strength. If this state of dependence and protection continues long, it becomes the cause of the destruction of the nation, and its ruin is not far to seek.

Of course, it can be reasonably concluded that, when

<sup>1</sup> Agnivarna was a prince of the Solar race, who never used to come out of the seraglio, and died of consumption due to excessive indulgence.

<sup>2</sup> The great king Asoka was at first called Chandasoka, i.e., Fierce Asoka, because of his ascending the throne by killing his brother and his other cruel deeds. After nine years of reign he became a convert to Buddhism and his character underwent a complete transformation. He was thenceforth known for his good deeds by the name of Dharmasoka, the beloved of the gods.

the government of a country is guided by codes of laws, enjoined by Shâstras which are the outcome of knowledge inspired by the divine genius of great sages, such a government must lead to the unbroken welfare of the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the subjects alike. But we have seen already how far the operation of those laws was, or may be, possible in practical life<sup>1</sup>. The voice of the ruled in the government of their land—which is the watchword of the modern Western world, and, of which, the last expression has been echoed with a thundering voice in the Declaration of the American Government, in the words, “That the government of the people of this country must be by the people and for the good of the people,”—cannot however be said to have been totally unrecognised in ancient India. The Greek travellers and others saw many independent small States scattered all over this country, and references are also found, to this effect, in many places of the Buddhistic literature. And there cannot be the least doubt about it, that the germ of self-government was at least present in the shape of the village Panchâyat,<sup>1</sup> which is still to be found in existence in many places of India. But the germ remained for ever the germ, the seed though put in the ground never grew into a tree. This idea of self-government never passed beyond the embryo state of the village Panchayat system, and never spread into society at large.

In the religious communities, among Sannyâsins in the Buddhist monasteries, we have ample evidence to show that self-government was fully developed. Even now, one wonders to see how the power of the Panchayat system, of the principles of self-government, is working amongst the Nâgâ Sannyasins—what deep respect the “Government by the Five” commands from them, what effective

<sup>1</sup> Literally, “government by five,” in which the village-men sit together and decide, among themselves, all disputes.

individual rights each Naga can exercise within his own sect, what excellent working of the power of organisation and concerted action they have among themselves !

With the deluge which swept the land by the advent of Buddhism, the priestly power fell into decay and the royal power was in the ascendant. Buddhist priests are renouncers of the world, living in monasteries as homeless ascetics unconcerned with secular affairs. They have neither the will nor the endeavour to bring and keep the royal power under their control, through the threat of curses or magic arrows. Even if there were any remnant of such a will, its fulfilment has now become an impossibility. For, Buddhism has shaken the thrones of all the oblation-eating gods and brought them down from their heavenly positions. The state of being a Buddha is superior to the heavenly positions of many a Brahmâ or an Indra, who vie with each other in offering their worship at the feet of the Buddha, the God-man ! And to this Buddhahood, every man has the privilege to attain ; it is open to all, even in this life. From the descent of the gods, as a natural consequence, the superiority of the priests who were supported by them, is gone.

Accordingly, the reins of that mighty sacrificial horse—the royal power—are no longer held in the firm grasp of the Vedic priest, and being now free it can roam anywhere by its unbridled will. The centre of power, in this period, is neither with the priests, chanting the Sâma hymns and performing the Yajnas according to the Yajur Veda, nor is the power vested in the hands of Kshatriya kings, separated from each other and ruling over small independent States. But the centre of power in this age is in emperors whose unobstructed sway extend over vast areas bounded by the ocean, covering the whole of India from one end to the other. The leaders of this age are no longer Visvâmitra or Vasishtha, but emperors like Chandragupta, Dharmasoka and others. There never

were emperors who ascended the throne of India and led her to the pinnacle of her glory such as those lords of the earth who ruled over her in paramount sway during the Buddhistic period. The end of this period is characterised by the appearance of Rajput power on the scene, and the rise of modern Hinduism. With the rise of Rajput power, on the decline of Buddhism, the sceptre of the Indian empire, dislodged from its paramount power, was again broken into a thousand pieces and wielded by small powerless hands. At this time, the Brâhmanical (priestly) power again succeeded in raising its head, not as an adversary as before, but this time as an auxiliary to the royal supremacy.

During this revolution, that perpetual struggle for supremacy between the priestly and the royal classes, which began from the Vedic times and continued through ages till it reached its climax at the time of the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, has ceased for ever. Now these two mighty powers are friendly to each other, but neither is there any more that glorious Kshatra (warlike) valour of the kings, nor that spiritual brilliance which characterised the Brâhmanas, each has lost his former intrinsic strength. As might be expected, this new union of the two forces was soon engaged in the satisfaction of mutual self-interests, and became dissipated by spending its vitality on extirpating their common opponents, especially the Buddhists of the time, and on similar other deeds. Being steeped in all the vices consequent on such a union, *e g*, the sucking of the blood of the masses, taking revenge on the enemy, spoliation of others' property, etc., they in vain tried to imitate the Râjasuya and other Vedic sacrifices of the ancient kings, and only made a ridiculous farce of them. The result was that they were bound hand and foot by a formidable train of sycophantic attendance and its obsequious flatteries, and being entangled in an interminable net of rites and ceremonies with flourishes of Mantras

and the like, they soon became a cheap and ready prey to the Mohāmmedan invaders from the West.

That priestly power which began its strife for superiority with the royal power from the Vedic times and continued it down the ages, that hostility against the Kshatra power, Bhagavan Śrī Kṛṣṇa succeeded by his superhuman genius in putting a stop to, at least for the time being, during his earthly existence. That Brāhmanya power was almost effaced from its field of work in India, during the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, or, perhaps, was holding its feeble stand, by being subservient to the strong antagonistic religions. That Brahmanya power, since the appearance of Rājput power which held sway over India under the Mihira dynasty and others, made its last effort to recover its lost greatness ; and in its effort to establish that supremacy, it sold itself at the feet of the fierce hordes of barbarians, newly come from Central Asia, and to win their pleasure introduced in the land their hateful manners and customs. Moreover, it, the Brahmanya power, solely devoting itself to the easy means to dupe ignorant barbarians, brought into vogue mysterious rites and ceremonies backed by its new Mantras and the like, and in doing so itself lost its former wisdom, its former vigour and vitality, and its own chaste habits of long acquirement. Thus it turned the whole Aryāvarta into a deep and vast whirlpool of the most vicious, the most horrible, the most abominable, barbarous customs, and as the inevitable consequence of countenancing these detestable customs and superstitions, it soon lost all its own internal strength and stamina, and became the weakest of the weak. What wonder that it should be broken into a thousand pieces and fall, at the mere touch of the storm of Mussalman invasions from the West ! That great Brahmanya power fell—who knows, if ever to rise again ?

The resuscitation of the priestly power under the Mussalman rule, was, on the other hand, an utter impos-

sibility The Prophet Mahomet himself was dead against the priestly class in any shape, and tried his best for the total destruction of this power by formulating rules and injunctions to that effect Under the Mussalman rule, the king himself was the supreme priest, he was the chief guide in religious matters, and, when he became the emperor, he cherished the hope of being the paramount leader in all matters, over the whole Mussalman world To the Mussalman, the Jew or the Christian is not an object of extreme detestation, they are, at the worst, men of little faith But not so the Hindu According to him the Hindu is idolatrous, the hateful Kafir, hence, in this life he deserves to be butchered, and in the next, eternal hell is in store for him The utmost the Mussalman kings could do as a favour to the priestly class—the spiritual guides of these Kafirs—was to allow them somehow to pass their life silently and wait for the last moment This was again sometimes considered too much kindness! If the religious ardour of any king was a little more uncommon, there would immediately follow arrangements for a great Yajna, by way of Kafir-slaughter!

On one side, the royal power is now centred in kings, professing a different religion and given to different customs On the other, the priestly power has been entirely displaced from its influential position as the controller and lawgiver of the society The Koran and its code of laws have taken the place of the Dharma Shâstras of Manu and others The Sanskrit language has made room for the Persian and the Arabic The Sanskrit language has to remain confined only to the purely religious writings and religious matters of the conquered and detested Hindu, and, as such, has since been living a precarious life at the hands of the neglected priest. The priest himself, the relic of the Brahmanya power, fell back upon the last resource of conducting only the com-



paratively unimportant family ceremonies, such as the matrimonial, etc., and that also only so long and as much as the mercy of the Mohammedan rulers permitted

In the Vedic and the adjoining periods, the royal power could not manifest itself, on account of the grinding pressure of the priestly power. We have seen how, during the Buddhistic revolution, resulting in the fall of the Brahmanical supremacy, the royal power in India reached its culminating point. In the interval between the fall of the Buddhistic and the establishment of the Mohammedan empire, we have seen how the royal power was trying to raise its head through the Rajputs in India, and how it failed in its attempt. At the root of this failure, too, could be traced the same old endeavours of the Vedic priestly class to bring back and revive with a new life their original (ritualistic) days.

Crushing the Brahmanical supremacy under his feet, the Mussalman king was able to restore, to a considerable extent, the lost glories of such dynasties of emperors as the Maurya, the Gupta, the Andhra and the Kshâtrapa<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the priestly power—which sages like Kumârilla, Sankara and Râmânuja tried to re-establish, which, for some time, was supported by the sword of the Rajput power, and tried to rebuild its structure on the fall of its Jain and Buddhist adversaries—was, under Mohammedan rule, laid to sleep for ever, knowing no awakening. In this period, the antagonism or warfare is not between kings and priests, but between kings and kings. At the end of this period, when Hindu power again raised its head, and, to some extent, was successful in regenerating Hinduism, through the Mahrattas and the Sikhs, we do not find much play of the priestly power with these regenerations. On the contrary, when the Sikhs admitted any Brahman into their sect, they, at

<sup>1</sup> The Persian governors of Aryâvarta and Guzrat

first, compelled him publicly to give up his previous Brahmanical signs and adopt the recognised signs of their own religion

In this manner, after an agelong play of action and reaction between these two forces, the final victory of the royal power was echoed on the soil of India for several centuries, in the name of foreign monarchs professing an entirely different religion from the faith of the land. But at the end of this Mohammedan period, another entirely new power made its appearance on the arena, and slowly began to assert its prowess in the affairs of the Indian world.

This power is so new, its nature and workings are so foreign to the Indian mind, its rise so inconceivable, and its vigour so insuperable, that though it wields the suzerain power up till now, only a handful of Indians understand what this power is.

We are talking of the occupation of India by England.

From very ancient times, the fame of India's vast wealth and her rich granaries has enkindled in many powerful foreign nations the desire for conquering her. She has been, in fact, again and again conquered by foreign nations. Then why should we say that the occupation of India by England was something new and foreign to the Indian mind?

From time immemorial Indians have seen the mightiest royal power tremble before the frown of the ascetic priest, devoid of worldly desire, armed with spiritual strength, the power of Mantras (sacred formulæ) and religious lore, and the weapon of curses. They have also seen the subject people silently obey the commands of their heroic all-powerful suzerains, backed by their arms and armies like a flock of sheep before a lion. But that a handful of Vaisyas (traders) who, despite their great wealth, have ever crouched awe-

stricken not only before the king but also before any member of the royal family, would unite, cross for purposes of business rivers and seas, would solely by virtue of their intelligence and wealth, by degrees make puppets of the long-established Hindu and Mohammedan dynasties, not only so, but that they would buy as well the services of the ruling powers of their own country, and use their valour and learning as powerful instruments for the influx of their own riches—this is a spectacle entirely novel to the Indians, as also the spectacle that the descendants of the mighty nobility of a country, of which a proud lord, sketched by the extraordinary pen of its great poet, says to a common man, “Out, dunghill ! darest thou brave a nobleman ?” would, in no distant future, consider it the zenith of human ambition to be sent to India as obedient servants of a body of merchants, called The East India Company,—such a sight was, indeed, a novelty unseen by India before !

According to the prevalence, in greater or lesser degree of the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, in man, the four castes, the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra, are everywhere present at all times, in all civilised societies. By the mighty hand of time, their number and power also vary at different times, in regard to different countries. In some countries the numerical strength or influence of one of these castes may preponderate over another, at some period, one of the classes may be more powerful than the rest. But from a careful study of the history of the world, it appears that, in conformity to the Law of Nature, the four castes, the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, do, in every society, one after another in succession, govern the world.

Among the Chinese, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Aryas, the Iranians,

the Jews, the Arabs—among all these ancient nations, the supreme power of guiding society is, in the first period of their history, in the hands of the Brahman, or the priest. In the second period, the ruling power is the Kshatriya, that is, either absolute monarchy, or oligarchical government by a chosen body of men. Among the modern Western nations, with England at their head, this power of controlling society has been, for the first time, in the hands of the Vaisyas, or mercantile communities, made rich through the carrying on of commerce.

Though Troy and Carthage of ancient times, and Venice and similar other small commercial States of comparatively modern times, became highly powerful, yet, amongst them, there was not the real rising of the Vaisya power, in the proper sense of the term.

Correctly speaking, the descendants of the royal family had the sole monopoly of the commerce of those old days, by employing the common people and their servants under them to carry on the trade, and appropriated to themselves the profits accruing from it. Excepting these few men no one was allowed to take any part, or voice an opinion even in the government of the country and kindred affairs. In the oldest countries like Egypt, the priestly power enjoyed unmolested supremacy only for a short period, after which it became subjugated to the royal power and lived as an auxiliary to it. In China, the royal power, centralised by the genius of Confucius, has been controlling and guiding the priestly power, in obedience to its absolute will, for more than twenty-five centuries, and during the last two centuries, the all-absorbing Lamas of Thibet, though they are the spiritual guides of the royal family, have been compelled to pass their days, being subject in every way to the Chinese Emperor.

In India, the royal power succeeded in conquering the priestly power and declaring its untrammelled authority

long after the other ancient civilised nations had done so, and therefore, the inauguration of the Indian Empire came about long after the Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian and other Empires had risen. It was only with the Jewish people that the royal power, though it tried hard to establish its supremacy over the priestly, had to meet a complete defeat in the attempt. Not even the Vaisyas attained the ruling power with the Jew. On the other hand, the common subject people, trying to free themselves from the shackles of priestcraft, were crushed to death, under the internal commotion of adverse religious movements like Christianity and the external pressure of the mighty Roman Empire.

As in the ancient days, the priestly power, in spite of its long-continued struggle, was subdued by the more powerful royal power, so, in modern times, before the violent blow of the newly-risen Vaisya power, many a kingly crown has to kiss the ground, many a sceptre is for ever broken to pieces. Only those few thrones which are allowed still to exercise some power in some of the civilised countries, and make a display of their royal pomp and grandeur, are all maintained solely by the vast hordes of wealth of these Vaisya communities—the dealers in salt, oil, sugar and wine—and kept up as a magnificent and imposing front, and as a means of glorification to the really governing body behind—the Vaisyas.

That mighty newly-arsen Vaisya power,—at whose command, electricity carries messages in an instant from one pole to another, whose highway is the vast ocean, with its mountain-high waves, at whose instance, commodities are being carried with the greatest ease from one part of the globe to another, and at whose mandate, even the greatest monarchs tremble—on the white foamy crest of that huge wave—the all-conquering Vaisya power—is installed, in all its grandeur, the majestic throne of England

Therefore, the conquest of India by 'England is not conquest by Jesus or the Bible, as we are often asked to believe. neither is it like the conquest of India by the Moguls and the Pathans. But behind the name of the Lord Jesus, the Bible, the magnificent palaces, the heavy tramp of the feet of armies consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry, shaking the earth, the sounds of war trumpets, bugles and drums, and the splendid display of the royal throne, behind all these, there is always the virtual presence of England—that England, whose war-flag is the factory chimney, whose troops are the merchant-men, whose battle-fields are the market-places of the world, and whose Empress is the shining Goddess Fortune herself'. It is on this account I have said before, that it is indeed an unseen novelty, this conquest of India by England. What new revolution will be effected in India by her clash with the new giant power, and as the result of that revolution what new transformation is in store for future India, cannot be inferred from her past history.

I have stated previously that the four castes, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra do, in succession, rule the world. During the period of supreme authority exercised by each of these castes, some acts are accomplished, which conduce to the welfare of the people, while others are injurious to them.

The foundation of the priestly power rests on intellectual strength, and not on the physical strength of arms. Therefore, with the supremacy of the priestly power, there is a great prevalence of intellectual and literary culture. Every human heart is always anxious for communication with, and help from, the super-sensuous spiritual world. The entrance to that world is not possible for the generality of mankind, only a few great souls, who can acquire a perfect control over their sense organs, and who are possessed with a nature preponderating with the essence of Sattva Guna, are able to pierce the formidable wall of

Matter and come face to face, as it were, with the super-sensuous—it is only they who know the workings of that kingdom, bring messages from it and show the Way to others. These great souls are the priests, the primitive guides, leaders and movers of human societies.

The priest knows the gods and communicates with them, he is therefore worshipped as a god. Leaving behind the thoughts of the world, he has no longer to devote himself to the earning of his bread by the sweat of his brow. The best and foremost parts of all food and drink are due as offerings to the gods, and of these gods, the visible proxies on earth, are the priests. It is through their mouths that they partake of the offerings. Knowingly, or unknowingly, society gives the priest abundant leisure, and he can therefore get the opportunity of being meditative and of thinking higher thoughts. Hence the development of wisdom and learning originates first with the supremacy of the priestly power. There stands the priest between the dreadful lion—the king—on the one hand, and the terrified flock of sheep—the subject people—on the other. The destructive leap of the lion is checked by the controlling rod of spiritual power in the hands of the priest. The flame of the despotic will of the king, maddened in the pride of his wealth and men, is able to burn into ashes everything that comes in his way; but it is only a word from the priest, who has neither wealth nor men behind him but whose sole strength is his spiritual power, that can quench the despotic royal will, as water the fire.

With the ascendancy of the priestly supremacy, are seen the first advent of civilisation, the first victory of the divine nature over the animal, the first conquest of spirit over matter, and the first manifestation of the divine power, which is potentially present in this very slave of nature, this lump of flesh, to wit, the human body. The priest is the first discriminator of spirit from matter, the first help to bring this world in communion with the next,

the first messenger from the gods to man, and the intervening bridge that connects the king with his subjects. The first offshoot of universal welfare and good is nursed by his spiritual power, by his devotion to learning and wisdom, by his renunciation, the watchword of his life, nay, watered even by the flow of his own life-blood. It is therefore that in every land it was he to whom the first and foremost worship was offered. It is therefore that even his memory is sacred to us !

There are evils as well. With the growth of life is sown simultaneously the seed of death. Darkness and light always go together. There are great evils, indeed, which, if not checked in proper time, lead to the ruin of society. The play of power through gross matter appeals to universal experience, every one sees, every one understands, the mighty manifestation of gross material force as displayed in the play of battle-axes and swords, or in the burning properties of fire and lightning. Nobody doubts these things, nor can there ever be any question about their genuineness. But, where the repository of power and the centre of its play are wholly mental, where the power is confined to certain special words, to certain special modes of uttering them, to the mental repetition of certain mysterious syllables, or to other similar processes and applications of the mind, there, light is mixed with shade, there, the ebb and flow naturally disturb the otherwise unshaken faith, and there, even when things are actually seen or directly perceived, still, sometimes doubts arise as to their real occurrence. Where distress, fear, anger, malice, spirit of retaliation and the like passions of man, leaving the palpable force of arms, leaving the gross material methods to gain the end in view, which every one can understand, substitute in their stead the mysterious mental processes like *Stambhana*, *Uchchâtana*, *Vasikarana* and *Mârana*,<sup>1</sup> for

<sup>1</sup> *Stambhana*, *Uchchâtana*, *Vasikarana* and *Mârana*, are respectively, suppression of any of the bodily faculties causing a



their fructification—there, a cloud of smoky indistinctness, as it were, naturally envelops the mental atmosphere of those men who often live and move in such misty worlds of obscure mysticism. No straight line of action presents itself before such a mind, even if it does, the mind distorts it into crookedness. The final result of all this is insincerity,—that very limited narrowness of the heart—and above all, the most fatal is the extreme intolerance born of malicious envy at the superior excellence of another.

The priest naturally says to himself. “Why should I part with the power that has made the Devas subservient to me, has given me mastery over physical and mental illnesses, and has gained for me the service of ghosts, demons and other unseen spirits? I have dearly bought this power by the price of extreme renunciation. Why should I give to others that to get which I had to give up my wealth, name, fame, in short, all my earthly comforts and happiness?” Again, that power is entirely mental. And how many opportunities are there of keeping it a perfect secret! Entangled in this wheel of circumstances, human nature becomes what it inevitably should be. being used to practise constant self-concealment, it becomes a victim of extreme selfishness and hypocrisy, and at last succumbs to the poisonous consequences which they bring in their train. In time, the reaction of this very desire to concealment redounds upon oneself. All knowledge, all wisdom, is almost lost, for want of proper exercise and diffusion, and what little remains, is thought to have been obtained from some supernatural source, and, therefore, far from making fresh efforts to go in for originality and gain knowledge of new sciences, it is considered useless and futile to attempt even to improve the remnants of the old by cleansing them of their corruptions. Thus lost to former wisdom, the former indomitable spirit of self,

person's ruin, subduing and getting mastery over any one and killing another by means of magical incantations.

reliance, the priest, now glorifying himself merely in the name of his forefathers, vainly struggles to preserve untarnished for himself the same glory, the same privilege, the same veneration and the same supremacy as was enjoyed by his great forefathers. Consequently, his violent collision with the other castes.

According to the law of nature, wherever there is an awakening of a new and stronger life, there it tries to conquer and take the place of the old and the decaying. Nature favours the dying out of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. The final result of such conflict between the priestly and the other classes has been mentioned already.

That renunciation, self-control and asceticism of the priest, which, during the period of his ascendancy, were devoted to the pursuance of earnest researches of truth, are, on the eve of his decline, employed anew and spent solely in the accumulation of objects of self-gratification and in the extension of privileged superiority over others. That power, the centralisation of which in himself gave him all honour and worship, has now been dragged down from its high heavenly position to the lowest abyss of hell. Having lost sight of the goal, drifting aimless, the priestly power is entangled, like the spider, in the web spun by itself. The chain that has been forged from generation to generation, with the greatest care, to be put on others' feet, is now tightened round its own in a thousand coils, and is thwarting its own movement in hundreds of ways. Caught in the endless thread of the net of infinite rites, ceremonies and customs, which it spread on all sides as external means for purification of the body and the mind with a view to keep society in the iron grasp of these innumerable bonds—the priestly power, thus hopelessly entangled from head to foot, is now asleep in despair! There is no escaping out of it now. Tear the net and the priesthood of the priest is shaken to its foundation! There is implanted in every man, naturally, a strong desire for progress, and those who,

finding that the fulfilment of this desire is an impossibility so long as one is trammelled in the shackles of priesthood, rend this net and take to the profession of other castes in order to earn money thereby—they, the society immediately dispossesses of their priestly rights. Society has no faith in the Brahman-ness of the so-called Brahmans who, instead of keeping the Shikhâ,<sup>1</sup> part their hair, who, giving up their ancient habits and ancestral customs, clothe themselves in semi-European dress and adopt the newly introduced usages from the West, in a hybrid fashion. Again, in those parts of India, wherever this new-comer, the English Government, is introducing new modes of education and opening up new channels for the coming in of wealth, there, hosts of Brahman youths are giving up their hereditary priestly profession, and trying to earn their livelihood and become rich by adopting the callings of other castes, with the result that the habits and customs of the priestly class, handed down from their distant forefathers, are scattered to the winds and are fast disappearing from the land.

In Gujarat, each secondary sect of the Brahmans is divided into two subdivisions, one being of those who still stick to the priestly profession, while the other lives by other professions. There, only the first subdivisions, carrying on the priestly profession, are called "Brâhmans," and, though the other subdivisions are, by lineage, descendants from Brahman fathers, yet the former do not link themselves in matrimonial relation with the latter. For example, by the name of "Nâgara Brâhman," are meant only those Brahmans who are priests living on alms, and by the name "Nagara" only, are meant those Brahmans who have accepted service under the Government, or those who have been carrying on the Vaisya's profession. But it appears that such distinctions will not long continue in

<sup>1</sup> The sacred tuft or lock of hair left on the crown of the head at tonsure

these days, in Gujarat Even the sons of the "Nagara Brahmans" are nowadays getting English education and entering into Government service, or adopting some mercantile business. Even orthodox Pandits of the old school, undergoing pecuniary difficulties, are sending their sons to the colleges of the English universities, or making them choose the callings of Vaidyas, Kâyasthas and other non-Brahman castes If the current of affairs goes on running in this course, then it is a question of most serious reflection, no doubt, how long more will the priestly class continue on India's soil Those who lay the fault of attempting to bring down the supremacy of the priestly class at the door of any particular person, or body of persons, other than themselves, ought to know that, in obedience to the inevitable Law of Nature, the Brahman caste is erecting, with its own hands, its own sepulchre, and this is what ought to be It is good and appropriate that every caste of high birth and privileged nobility should make it its principal duty to raise its own funeral pyre with its own hands.

Accumulation of power is as necessary as its diffusion, or rather more so. The accumulation of blood in the heart is an indispensable condition for life—its non-circulation throughout the body means death For the welfare of society, it is absolutely necessary, at certain times, to have all knowledge and power concentrated in certain families or castes, to the exclusion of others, but that concentrated power is focussed for the time being, only to be scattered broadcast over the whole of society in future If this diffusion be withheld, the destruction of that society is, without doubt, near at hand

On the other side, the king is like the lion, in him are present both the good and evil propensities of the lord of beasts Never for a moment his fierce nails are held back from tearing to pieces the heart of innocent animals living on herbs and grass, to allay his thirst for blood, when

occasion arises, again, the poet says, though himself stricken with old age and dying with hunger, the lion never kills the weakest fox that throws itself in his arms for protection. If the subject classes, for a moment, stand as impediments in the way of the gratification of the senses of the royal lion, their death-knell is inevitably tolled; if they humbly bow down to his commands, they are perfectly safe. Not only so. Not to speak of ancient days, even in modern times, no society can be found in any country where the effectiveness of individual self-sacrifice for the good of the many, and of the oneness of purpose and endeavour actuating every member of the society for the common good of the whole, has been fully realised. Hence the necessity of the kings, who are the creations of the society itself. They are the centres where all the forces of society, otherwise loosely scattered about, are made to converge and from which they start and course through the body politic and animate society.

As during the Brâhmanical supremacy, at the first stage is the awakening of the first impulse for search after knowledge, and later, the continual and careful fostering of the growth of that impulse still in its infancy—so, during the Kshatriya supremacy, a strong desire for pleasure pursuits has made its appearance at the first stage, and later have sprung up inventions and developments of arts and sciences, as the means for its gratification. Can the king in the height of his glory hide his proud head within the lowly cottages of the poor? Or can the common food of his subjects ever minister to his royal appetite with satisfaction?

He whose dignity bears no comparison with any one else on earth, he who is divinity residing in the temple of the human body—for the common man, to cast even a mere glance at his—the king's—objects of pleasure is a great sin, to think of ever possessing them is quite out of the question. The body of the king is not like the bodies

of other people, it is too sacred to be polluted by any contamination, in certain countries it is even believed never to come under the sway of death. A halo of equal sacredness shines around the queen, so she is scrupulously guarded from the gaze of the common folk, not even the sun may cast a glance on her beauty! Hence, the rising of magnificent palaces to take the place of thatched cottages. The sweet harmonious strain of artistic music, flowing as it were from heaven, silenced the disorderly jargon of the rabble. Delightful gardens, pleasant groves, beautiful galleries, charming paintings, exquisite sculptures, fine and costly apparel began to displace, by gradual steps, the natural beauties of rugged woods and the rough and coarse dress of the simple rustic. Thousands of intelligent men left the toilsome task of the ploughman and turned their attention to the new field of fine arts, where they could display the finer play of their intellect in the less laborious and easier ways. Villages lost their importance—cities rose in their stead.

It was in India, again, that the kings, after having enjoyed for some time earthly pleasures to their full satisfaction, were stricken at the latter part of their lives with heavy world-weariness, as is sure to follow on extreme sense-gratification, and thus being satiated with worldly pleasures, they retired at their old age into secluded forests, and there began to contemplate the deep problems of life. The results of such renunciation and deep meditation were marked by a strong dislike for cumbrous rites and ceremonials, and an extreme devotion to the highest spiritual truths which we find embodied in the Upanishads, the Gita and the Jaina and the Bauddha Scriptures. Here also was a great conflict between the priestly and the royal powers. Disappearance of the elaborate rites and ceremonials meant a death-blow to the priest's profession. Therefore, naturally, at all times and in every country, the priests gird up their loins and try

their best to preserve the ancient customs and usages, while, on the other side, stand, in opposition, kings like Janaka, backed by Kshatriya prowess as well as spiritual power. We have dwelt at length already on this bitter antagonism between the two parties.

As the priest is busy about centralising all knowledge and learning at a common centre, to wit, himself, so the king is ever up and doing in collecting all the earthly powers and focussing them in a central point, *i.e.*, his own self. Of course, both are beneficial to society. At one time they are both needed for the common good of society, but that is only at its infant stage. But, if attempts be made, when society has passed its infant stage and reached its vigorous youthful condition, to clothe it by force with the dress which suited it in its infancy, and keep it bound within narrow limits, then either it bursts the bonds by virtue of its own strength and tries to advance, or where it fails to do so, it retraces its footsteps and, by slow degrees, returns to its primitive uncivilised condition.

Kings are like parents to their subjects, and the subjects are the kings' children. The subjects should, in every respect, look up to the king, and stick to their king with unreserved obedience, and the king should rule them with impartial justice and look to their welfare, and bear the same affection towards them as he would towards his own children. But what rule applies to individual homes, applies to the whole society as well, for society is only the aggregate of individual homes. "When the son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend and equal,"<sup>1</sup>—if that is the rule, does not the infant society ever attain that age of sixteen? It is the evidence of history that at a certain time every society attains its

<sup>1</sup> Taken from one of the well-known didactic verses of the statesman-Pandit Chânakya, which runs thus:—"Let the father treat with tenderness the child till he is five, let him (the father) reprove him (the child) for the next ten years; when the son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend."

manhood, when a strong conflict ensues between the ruling power and the common people. The life of the society, its expansion and civilisation, depend on its victory or defeat in this conflict

Such changes revolutionising society have been happening in India again and again, only in this country they have been effected in the name of religion, for religion is the life of India, religion is the language of this country, the symbol of all its movements. The Chârvâka, the Jaina, the Bauddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Kabir, Nânak, Chaitanya, the Brâhmo Samâj, the Arya Samaj—of all these and similar other sects, the wave of religion, foaming, thundering, surging, breaks in the front, while in the rear follows the filling-up of social wants. If all desires can be accomplished by the mere utterance of some meaningless syllables, then who will exert himself and go through difficulties to work out the fulfilment of his desires? If this malady enters into the entire body of any social system, then that society becomes slothful and indisposed to any exertion, and soon hastens to its ruin. Hence the slashing sarcasm of the Charvakas, who believed only in the reality of sense-perceptions and nothing beyond. What could have saved Indian society from the ponderous burden of omnifarious ritualistic ceremonialism with its animal and other sacrifices, which all but crushed the very life out of it, except the Jaina revolution, which took its strong stand exclusively on chaste morals and philosophical truths?—or without the Bauddha revolution, what would have delivered the suffering millions of the lower classes from the violent tyrannies of the influential higher castes? When, in course of time, Buddhism declined and its extremely pure and moral character gave place to equally bad, unclean and immoral practices, when Indian society trembled under the infernal dance of the various races of barbarians who were allowed into the Buddhist fold by virtue of its universal all-embracing spirit of equality—then



Sankara, and later Ramanuja, appeared on the scene and tried their best to bring society back to its former days of glory and re-establish its lost status. Again, it is an undoubted fact, that if there had not been the advent of Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya, in the Mohammedan period and the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj in our own day, then, by this time, the Mohammedans and the Christians would have far outnumbered the Hindus of the present day in India.

What better material is there than nourishing food to build up the body composed of various elements, and the mind which sends out infinite waves of thought? But if that food which goes to sustain the body and strengthen the mind is not properly assimilated, and the natural functions of the body do not work properly, then that very thing becomes the root of all evil.

The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole, apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable—this is an eternal truth, and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built. To move slowly towards the infinite whole, bearing a constant feeling of intense sympathy and sameness with it, being happy with its happiness and being distressed in its affliction, is the individual's sole duty. Not only is it his duty, but in its transgression is his death, while compliance with this great truth leads to life immortal. This is the law of Nature, and who can throw 'dust into her ever-watchful eyes? None can hoodwink society and deceive it for any length of time. However much there may have accumulated heaps of refuse and mud on the surface of society—still, at the bottom of those heaps the life-breath of society is ever to be found pulsating with the vibrations of universal love and self-denying compassion for all. Society is like the earth that patiently bears incessant molestations; but she wakes up one day, however long that may be in coming, and the

force of the shaking tremors of that awakening hurls off to a distance the accumulated dirt of self-seeking meanness, piled up during millions of patient and silent years !

We ignore this sublime truth and though we suffer a thousand times for our folly, yet, in our absurd foolishness, impulsed by the brute in us, we do not believe in it We try to deceive, but a thousand times we find we are deceived ourselves, and yet we do not desist ! Mad that we are, we imagine we can impose on nature ! With our short-sighted vision we think ministering to the self at any cost is the be-all and end-all of life.

Wisdom, knowledge, wealth, men, strength, prowess, and whatever else nature gathers and provides us with, are all only for diffusion, when the moment of need is at hand We often forget this fact Put the stamp of "*mine only*" upon the entrusted deposits, and, *pari passu*, we sow the seed of our own ruin !

The king, the centre of the forces of the aggregate of his subjects, soon forgets that those forces are only stored with him so that he may increase and give them back a thousandfold in their potency, with the result that they may spread over the whole community for its good Attributing all godship to himself, in his pride, like the king Vena<sup>1</sup> he looks upon other people as wretched specimens of humanity who should grovel before him, any opposition to his will, whether good or bad, is a great sin on the part of his subjects Hence oppression steps into the place of protection—sucking their blood in place of preservation If the society is weak and debilitated, it silently suffers all ill-treatment at the hands of the king, and as the natural consequence, both the king and his people go down and

<sup>1</sup> His story occurs in the Bhâgavatam The King Vena thought himself higher than Brahmâ, Vishnu and Maheshvara, and declared accordingly that all worship should be offered to him The Rishis once sought him and tried by good advice to make him give up such egoism, but he in return insulted them and ordered them to worship him, whereupon, it is said, he was destroyed by the fire of the anger of the Rishis

down and fall into the most degraded state, and thus become an easy prey to any nation stronger than themselves. Where the society is healthy and strong there soon follows a fierce contest between the king and his subjects, and, by its reaction and convulsion, are flung away the sceptre and the crown, and the throne and the royal paraphernalia become like past curiosities preserved in the museum galleries.

As the result of this contest—as its reaction—is the appearance of the mighty power of the Vaisya, before whose angry glance the crowned heads, the lords of heroes, tremble like an aspen leaf on their thrones—whom the poor as well as the prince humbly follow in vain expectation of the golden jar in his hands, that like Tantalus' fruit always recedes from the grasp.

The Brahman said: "Learning is the power of all powers, that learning is dependent upon me, I possess that learning, so the society must follow my bidding." For some days such was the case. The Kshatriya said: "But for the power of my sword, where would you be, O Brahman, with all your power of lore? You would in no time be wiped off the face of the earth. It is I alone that am the superior." Out flew the flaming sword from the jingling scabbard—society humbly recognised it with bended head. Even the worshipper of learning was the first to turn into the worshipper of the king. The Vaisya is saying. "You, madmen! what you call the effulgent all-pervading deity is here, in my hand, the ever-shining Gold, the Almighty Sovereign. Behold, through its grace, I am also equally all-powerful. O Brahmana! even now, I shall buy through its grace all your wisdom, learning, prayers and meditation. And, O great king! your sword, arms, valour and prowess will soon be employed, through the grace of this, my Gold, in carrying out my desired objects. Do you see those lofty and extensive mills? Those are my hives. See, how swarms of millions of bees, the Sudras,

are incessantly gathering honey for those hives. Do you know for whom? For me, this me, who in due course of time will squeeze out every drop of it for my own use and profit."

As during the supremacy of the Brahman and the Kshatriya, there is a centralisation of learning and advancement of civilisation, so the result of the supremacy of the Vaisya is accumulation of wealth. The power of the Vaisya lies in the possession of that coin, the charm of whose clinking sound works with an irresistible fascination on the minds of the four castes. The Vaisya is always in fear lest the Brahman swindles him out of this, his only possession, and lest the Kshatriya usurps it by virtue of his superior strength of arms. For self-preservation, the Vaisyas, as a body, are, therefore, of one mind. The Vaisya commands the money; the exorbitant interest that he can exact for its use by others, as with a lash in his hand, is his powerful weapon which strikes terror in the heart of all. By the power of his money, he is always busy curbing the royal power. That the royal power may not anyhow stand in the way of the inflow of his riches, the merchant is ever watchful. But, for all that, he has never the least wish that the power should pass on from the kingly to the Sudra class.

To what country does not the merchant go? Though himself ignorant, he in carrying on his trade, transplants the learning, wisdom, art and science of one country to another. The wisdom, civilisation and arts that accumulated in the heart of the social body, during the Brahman and the Kshatriya supremacies, are being diffused in all directions by the arteries of commerce to the different market-places of the Vaisya. But for the rising of this Vaisya power, who would have carried to-day the culture, learning, acquirements, and articles of food and luxury of one end of the world to the other?

And where are they through whose physical labour

only are possible the influence of the Brahman, the prowess of the Kshatriya, and the fortune of the Vaisya? What is their history, who, being the real body of society, are designated, at all times, in all countries, as "base-born?" For whom kind India prescribed the mild punishments, "Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh," and others of like nature, for such a grave offence as any attempt on their part to gain a share of the knowledge and wisdom monopolised by her higher classes—those "moving corpses" of India, and the "beasts of burden" of other countries—the Sudras, what is their lot in life? What shall I say of India? Let alone her Sudra class, her Brahmans, to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, are now the foreign professors, her Kshatriyas the ruling Englishman, and Vaisyas too, the English, in whose bone and marrow is the instinct of trade, so that, only the Sudra-ness—the-beast-of-burdenness—is now left with the Indians themselves.

A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind, neither aversion to maltreatments by others, nor dislike for slavery, neither love in the heart, nor hope, nor manliness; but what we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and strong antipathy against one another, morbid desire to ruin by hook or by crook the weak, and dog-like to lick the feet of the strong. Now the highest satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects, Yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others; civilisation in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries of the rich, or in the diffusion of ghastly obscenities! What to speak separately of the distinct Sudra class of such a land, where the whole population

has virtually come down to the level of the Sudra? The Sudras of countries other than India have become, it seems, a little awake, but they are wanting in proper education, and have only the mutual hatred of men of their own class—a trait common to Sudras. What avails it if they greatly outnumber the other classes? That unity, by which ten men collect the strength of a million, is yet far away from the Sudra, hence, according to the law of nature, the Sudras invariably form the subject race.

But there is hope. In the mighty course of time, the Brahman and the other higher castes too, are being brought down to the lower status of the Sudras, and the Sudras are being raised to higher ranks. Europe, once the land of Sudras, enslaved by Rome, is now filled with Kshatriya valour. Even before our eyes, powerful China, with fast strides, is going down to Sudra-hood, while insignificant Japan rising with the sudden start of a rocket, is throwing off her Sudra nature, and is invading by degrees the rights of the higher castes. The attaining of modern Greece and Italy to Kshatriya-hood, and the decline of Turkey, Spain and other countries, also deserve consideration here.

Yet, a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, *with their Sudra-hood*, that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudras—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to break slowly upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism,

Anarchism, Nihilism<sup>1</sup> and other like sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow. As the result of grinding pressure and tyranny, from time out of mind, the Sudras, as a rule, are either meanly servile, licking dog-like the feet of the higher class, or otherwise are as inhuman as brute beasts. Again, at all times their hopes and aspirations are baffled; hence, of firmness of purpose and perseverance in action they have none.

In spite of the spread of education in the West, there is a great hindrance in the way of the rising of the Sudra class, and that is the recognition of caste as determined by the inherence of more or less good or bad qualities. By this very qualitative caste system which obtained in India in ancient days, the Sudra class was kept down, bound hand and foot. In the first place, scarcely any opportunity was given to the Sudra for the accumulation of wealth, or the earning of proper knowledge and education, to add to this disadvantage, if ever a man of extraordinary parts and genius were born of the Sudra class, the influential higher sections of the society forthwith showered titular honours on him and lifted him up to their own circle. His wealth and the power of his wisdom were employed for the benefit of an alien caste—and his own caste-people reaped no benefit of his attainments; and not only so, the good-for-nothing people, the scum and refuse of the higher castes, were cast off and thrown into the Sudra class to swell their number.

Vasishtha, Narada, Satyakama Jôbâla, Vyâsa, Kripa, Drona, Karna and others of questionable parentage<sup>2</sup> were raised to the position of a Brahman or a Kshatriya, in virtue of their superior learning or valour, but it remains

<sup>1</sup> Socialism took its birth in 1835 A.D. The initiator of Anarchism was Bakunin, who was born in 1814 A.D. Nihilism was first inaugurated in Russia in 1862.

<sup>2</sup> (1) Vasishtha's father was Brahma and mother unknown.

(2) Narada's mother was a maid-servant and father unknown.

(3) Satyakama Jabala's mother was a maid-servant, by name Jabala, and father unknown. (4) Vyasa's father was a Brahman sage, Parâsara, and mother, Matsyagandhâ, the virgin daughter

to be seen how, by these upliftings, the prostitute, maid-servant, fisherman, or the charioteer<sup>1</sup> class was benefited. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from the Brahman, the Kshatriya or the Vaisya class, were always brought down to fill the ranks of the Sudras.

In modern India, no one born of Sudra parents, be he a millionaire or a great Pandit, has ever the right to leave his own society, with the result that the power of his wealth, intellect or wisdom, remaining confined within his own caste limits, is being employed for the betterment of his own community. This hereditary caste system of India, being thus unable to overstep its own bounds, is slowly but surely conducing to the advancement of the people moving within the same circle. The improvement of the lower classes of India will go on, in this way, so long as India will be under a Government dealing with its subjects irrespective of their caste and position.

Whether the leadership of society be in the hands of those who monopolise learning, or wield the power of riches or arms, the source of its power is always the subject masses. By so much as the class in power severs itself from this source, by so much is it sure to become weak. But such is the strange irony of fate, such is the queer working of *Mâyâ*, that they from whom this power is directly or indirectly drawn, by fair means or foul—by deceit, stratagem, force, or by voluntary gift—they soon

of a fisherman (5) Kripa's father was a Brahman sage, Saradvan Gautama, and mother, the goddess Janapadi. (6) Drona's father was the Brahman sage, Bharadvâj, and mother, the goddess Ghritachi, (7) Karna's mother was Kunti, who conceived during her maidenhood, and father, the god Sun. For detailed information, *vide* the accounts of their births, for (1), See chapter 174, *Adiparva*, *Mahabharata*, or in *Rigveda*, 7, 33, 11-13, for (2), chapter 6, *Skandha* 1, *Srimat Bhagavatam*, for (3) section 4, *Prapâthaka* iv, *Chhândogya Upanishad*, for (4), (5), (6) and (7), chapters, 105, 130, 130 and 111, respectively of the *Adiparva* of the *Mahabharata*.

<sup>1</sup> In her anxiety to save her reputation, Kunti threw the newborn child, Karna, into water. A charioteer found the child in this pitiable condition and took him home. Henceforth, the child was kept under the charioteer's parental care.



cease to be taken into account by the leading class. When in course of time, the priestly power totally estranged itself from the subject masses, the real dynamo of its power, it was overthrown by the then kingly power taking its stand on the strength of the subject people ; again, the kingly power, judging itself to be perfectly independent, created a gaping chasm between itself and the subject people, only to be itself destroyed, or become a mere puppet in the hands of the Vaisyas, who now succeeded in securing a relatively greater co-operation of the mass of the people. The Vaisyas have now gained their end ; so they no longer deign to count on help from the subject people, and are trying their best to dissociate themselves from them, consequently, here is being sown the seed of the destruction of this power as well.

Though themselves the reservoir of all powers, the subject masses, creating an eternal distance between one another, have been deprived of all their legitimate rights ; and they will remain so as long as this sort of relation continues.

A common danger, or sometimes a common cause of hatred or love, is the bond that binds people together. By the same law that herds beasts of prey together, men also unite into a body and form a caste or a nation of their own. Zealous love for one's own people and country, showing itself in bitter hatred against another—as of Greece against Persia, of Rome against Carthage, of the Arab against the Kaffir, of Spain against the Moor, of France against Spain, of England and Germany against France, and of America against England—is undoubtedly one of the main causes which lead to the advancement of one nation over another, by way of uniting itself in hostilities against another.

Self-love is the first teacher of self-renunciation. For the preservation of the individual's interest only, one looks first to the well-being of the whole. In the interest of

one's own nation is one's own interest, in the well-being of one's own nation is one's own well-being. Without the co-operation of the many, most works can by no means go on—even self-defence becomes an impossibility. The joining of friendly hands in mutual help for the protection of this self-interest is seen in every nation, and in every land. Of course, the circumference of this self-interest varies with different people. To multiply and to have the opportunity of living a precarious, hand to mouth existence, and over and above this, the condition that the religious pursuits of the higher castes may not suffer in any way, is of the highest gain and interest for Indians! For modern India, there is no better hope conceivable; this is the last rung of the ladder of India's life!

The present Government of India has certain evils attendant on it, and there are some very great and good parts in it as well. Of highest good is this, that after the fall of the Pataliputra Empire till now, India was never under the guidance of such a powerful machinery of Government as the British, wielding the sceptre throughout the length and breadth of the land. And, under this Vaisya supremacy, thanks to the strenuous enterprise natural to the Vaisya, as the objects of commerce are being brought from one end of the world to another, so at the same time as its natural sequence the ideas and thoughts of different countries are forcing their way into the very bone and marrow of India. Of these ideas and thoughts, some are really most beneficial to her, some are harmful, while others disclose the ignorance and inability of the foreigners to determine what is truly good for the inhabitants of this country.

But, piercing through the mass of whatever good or evil there may be, is seen rising the sure emblem of India's future prosperity—that as the result of the action and reaction between her own old national ideals, on the one hand, and the newly-introduced strange ideals of foreign

nations, on the other, she is slowly and gently awakening from her long deep sleep. Mistakes she will make—let her, there is no harm in that ; in all our actions, errors and mistakes are our only teachers. Who commits mistakes, the path of truth is attainable by him only. Trees never make mistakes, nor do stones fall into error ; animals are hardly seen to transgress the fixed laws of nature , but man is prone to err, and it is man who becomes God-on-earth. If our every movement from the nursery to the death-bed, if our every thought from rising at daybreak till retirement at midnight, be prescribed and laid down for us in minutest detail by others—and if the pressure of the king's sword be brought into requisition to keep us within the iron grasp of those prescribed rules—then, what remains for us to think independently for ourselves? What makes a man genius, a sage?—isn't it because he thinks, reasons, wills? Without exercise, the power of deep thinking is lost. Tamas prevails, the mind gets dull and inert, the spirit is brought down to the level of matter. Yet, even now, every religious preacher, every social leader is anxious to frame new laws and regulations for the guidance of society ! Does the country stand in want of rules? Has it not enough of them? Under the oppression of rules, the whole nation is verging on its ruin—who stops to understand this?

In the case of an absolute and arbitrary monarchy, the conquered race is not treated with so much contempt by the ruling power. Under such an absolute government, the rights of all subjects are equal, in other words, no one has any right to question or control the governing authority. So, there remains very little room for special privileges of caste and the like. But, where the monarchy is controlled by the voice of the ruling race, or a republican form of government rules the conquered race, there, a wide distance is created between the ruling and the ruled, and the most part of that power, which, if employed solely

for the well-being of the ruled classes, might have done immense good to them within a short time, is wasted by the government in its attempts and applications to keep the subject race under its entire control. Under the Roman Emperorship, foreign subjects were, for this very reason, happier than under the Republic of Rome. For this very reason, St Paul, the Christian Apostle, though born of the conquered Jewish race, obtained permission to appeal to the Roman Emperor, Cæsar, to judge of the charges laid against him<sup>1</sup>. Because some individual Englishman may call us "natives" or "niggers," and hate us as uncivilised savages, we do not gain or lose by that. We, on account of caste distinctions, have among ourselves far stronger feelings of hatred and scorn against one another; and who can say that the Brahmans, if they get some foolish unenlightened Kshatriya king on their side, will not graciously try again to "cut out the Sudras' tongues and chop off their limbs?" That recently in Eastern Aryavarta, the different caste-people seem to develop a feeling of united sympathy amidst themselves, with a view to ameliorate their present social condition—that, in the Mahratta country, the Brahmans have begun to sing pæans in praise of the "Maratha" race—these, the lower castes cannot yet believe to be the outcome of pure disinterestedness.

But, gradually, the idea is being formed in the minds of the English public that the passing away of the Indian Empire from their sway will end in imminent peril to the English nation, and be their ruin. So, by any means whatsoever, the supremacy of England must be maintained in India. The way to effect this, they think, is by keeping uppermost in the heart of every Indian the mighty prestige and glory of the British nation. It gives rise to both laughter and tears simultaneously, to observe how this ludicrous and pitiful sentiment is gaining ground among

<sup>1</sup> The Acts, xxv, 11

the English, and how they are steadily extending their *modus operandi* for the carrying out of this sentiment into practice. It seems as if the Englishmen resident in India are forgetting that, so long as that fortitude, that perseverance, and that intense national unity of purpose, by which Englishmen have earned this Indian Empire—and that ever wide-awake commercial genius aided by science, which has turned even India, the mother of all riches, into the principal mart of England—so long as these characteristics are not eliminated from their national life, their throne in India is unshakable. So long as these qualities are inherent in the British character, let thousands of such Indian Empires be lost, thousands will be earned again. But, if the flow of the stream of those qualities be retarded, shall an Empire be governed by the mere emblazoning of British prestige and glory? Therefore, when such remarkable traits of character are still predominant in the English as a nation, it is utterly useless to spend so much energy and power for the mere preservation of meaningless “prestige.” If that power were employed for the welfare of the subject-people, that would certainly have been a great gain for both the ruling and the ruled races.

It has been said before that India is slowly awakening through her friction with the outside nations, and as the result of this little awakening is the appearance, to a certain extent, of free and independent thought in modern India. On one side, is modern Western science, dazzling the eyes with the brilliancy of myriad suns, and driving in the chariot of hard and fast facts collected by the application of tangible powers direct in their incision; on the other, are the hopeful and strengthening traditions of her ancient forefathers, in the days when she was at the zenith of her glory—traditions that have been brought out of the pages of her history by the great sages of her own land and outside, that run for numberless years and

centuries through her every vein with the quickening of life drawn from universal love—traditions that reveal unsurpassed valour, superhuman genius, and supreme spirituality, which are the envy of the gods—these inspire her with future hopes. On one side, rank materialism, plenitude of fortune, accumulation of gigantic power, and intense sense-pursuits have, through foreign literature, caused a tremendous stir, on the other, through the confounding din of all these discordant sounds, she hears, in low yet unmistakable accents, the heart-rending cries of her ancient gods, cutting her to the quick. There lie before her various strange luxuries introduced from the West—celestial drinks, costly well-served food, splendid apparel, magnificent palaces, new modes of conveyance, new manners, new fashions dressed in which moves about the well-educated girl in shameless freedom—all these are arousing unfelt desires. Again, the scene changes and in its place appear, with stern presence, Sitâ, Sâvitri, austere religious vows, fastings, the forest retreat, the matted locks and orange garb of the semi-naked Sannyasin, Samâdhi and the search after the Self. On one side, is the independence of Western societies based on self-interest; on the other, is the extreme self-sacrifice of the Aryan society. In this violent conflict, is it strange that Indian society should be tossed up and down? Of the West, the goal is individual independence, the language, money-making education, the means, politics, of India, the goal is Mukti, the language, the Veda, the means, renunciation. For a time. Modern India thinks, as it were, I am ruining this worldly life of mine in vain expectation of uncertain spiritual welfare hereafter, which has spread its fascination over me, and again, lo! spell-bound she listens,—इति समारं मृत्युसर्दोष । कथमिह मानव तव सुखं ॥—“Here, in this world of death and change, O man, where is thy happiness?”

On one side, New India is saying, “We should have full freedom in the selection of husband and wife; be-

cause the marriage in which are involved the happiness and misery of all our future life, we must have the right to determine, according to our own free will." On the other, Old India is dictating, "Marriage is not for sense enjoyment, but to perpetuate the race. This is the Indian conception of marriage. By the producing of children, you are contributing to, and are responsible for, the future good or evil of the society. Hence, society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry and whom you shall not. That form of marriage obtains in society, which is conducive most to its well-being; do you give up your desire of individual pleasure for the good of the many."

On one side, New India is saying, "If we only adopt Western ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nations"; on the other, Old India is saying, "Fools! By imitation, other's ideas never become one's own—nothing, unless earned, is your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?"

On one side, New India is saying, "What the Western nations do is surely good, otherwise how did they become so great?" On the other side, Old India is saying, "The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware!"

Have we not then to learn anything from the West? Must we not needs try and exert ourselves for better things? Are we perfect? Is our society entirely spotless, without any flaw?—There are many things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things till we die—struggle is the end of human life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "As long as I live, so long I learn." That man or that society which has nothing to learn, is already in the jaws of death. Yes, learn we must many things from the West—but there are fears as well.

A certain young man of little understanding used always to blame the Hindu Shâstras before Sri Rama-

krishna. One day he praised the Bhagavad-Gita, on which Sri Ramakrishna said, "Methinks, some European Pandit has praised the Gita, and so he has also followed suit "

O India, this is your terrible danger The spell of imitating the West is getting such a strong hold upon you that what is good or what is bad is no longer decided by reason, judgment, discrimination, or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the white men praise or like, are good, whatever things they dislike or censure, are bad! Alas! What can be a more tangible proof of foolishness than this?

The Western ladies move freely everywhere, therefore, that is good; they choose for themselves their husbands, therefore, that is the highest step of advancement, the Westerners disapprove of our dress, decorations, food and ways of living, therefore, they must be very bad; the Westerners condemn image-worship as sinful, surely then, image-worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of it!

The Westerners say that worshipping a single Deity is fruitful of the highest spiritual good, therefore, let us throw our gods and goddesses into the river Ganges! The Westerners hold caste distinctions to be obnoxious, therefore, let all the different castes be jumbled into one! The Westerners say that child-marriage is the root of all evils, therefore, that is also very bad, of a certainty it is!

We are not discussing here whether these customs deserve countenance or rejection, but if the mere disapproval of the Westerners be the measure of the abominableness of our manners and customs, then, it is our duty to raise our emphatic protest against it

The present writer has, to some extent, personal experience of Western society His conviction resulting from such experience has been that there is such a wide divergence between the Western society and the Indian as



regards the primal course and goal of each, that any sect in India, framed after the Western model, will miss the aim. We have not the least sympathy with those who, never having lived in Western society and, therefore, utterly ignorant of the rules and prohibitions regarding the association of men and women that obtain there, and which act as safeguards to preserve the purity of the Western women, allow a free rein to the unrestricted intermingling of men and women in our society

I observed in the West also that the children of weaker nations, if born in England, give themselves out as Englishmen, instead of Greek, Portuguese, Spaniard, etc., as the case may be. All drift towards the strong. That the light of glory which shines in the glorious may anyhow fall and reflect on one's own body, i.e., to shine in the borrowed light of the great, is the one desire of the weak. When I see Indians dressed in European apparel and costumes, the thought comes to my mind, perhaps, they feel ashamed to own their nationality and kinship with the ignorant, poor, illiterate, down-trodden people of India! Nourished by the blood of the Hindu for the last fourteen centuries, the Parsee is no longer a "native!" Before the arrogance of the casteless, who pretend to be and glorify themselves in being Brahmans, the true nobility of the old, heroic, high-class Brahman melts into nothingness! Again, the Westerners have now taught us that those stupid, ignorant low-caste millions of India, clad only in loin cloths, are non-Aryans. They are therefore no more our kith and kin!

India! With this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty—wouldst thou, with these provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilisation and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic? O India! Forget not

that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti ; forget not that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Umâ ; forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness , forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the *Mother's* altar , forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood , forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother " Say, "The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother " Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice, "The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Vârânasi of my old age " Say, brother, "The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good," and repeat and pray day and night, "O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me ! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—Make me a Man !"

---

## THE EDUCATION THAT INDIA NEEDS<sup>1</sup>

In reply to your question about the method of work, the most important thing I have to say is that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired. I have heard much of your liberal mind, patriotism and steady perseverance from my friend Miss Müller, and the proof of your erudition is evident. I look upon it as great good fortune that you are desirous to know what little this insignificant life has been able to attempt, I shall state it to you here, as far as I can. But first I shall lay before you my mature convictions for your deliberation.

We have been slaves for ever, i.e., it has never been given to the masses of India to express the inner light which is their inheritance. The Occident has been rapidly advancing towards freedom for the last few centuries. In India, it was the king who used to prescribe everything, from Kulinism down to what one should eat and what one should not. In Western countries, the people do everything themselves.

The king now has nothing to say in any social matter; on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least faith in themselves, what to say of self-reliance. The faith in one's own self, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been even slightly carried into practice. It is for this reason that the Western method—i.e., first of all, discussion about the wished-for end, then the carrying it out by the combination of all the forces—is of no avail even now in this country; it is for this reason that we appear so greatly conservative under foreign rule. If this be true, then it is a vain attempt to do any great work by

<sup>1</sup> Written to Srimati Saralâ Ghosal, B.A., from Darjeeling, 24th April, 1897.

means of public discussion "There is no chance of a headache where there is no head"—where is the public? Besides, we are so devoid of strength that our whole energy is exhausted if we undertake to discuss anything, none is left for work. It is for this reason, I suppose, we observe in Bengal almost always—"Much cry but little wool." Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope—patiently, steadily and without noise.

Now about work. From the day when education and culture, etc. began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilisation as of Western countries, and the ancient civilisation as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, *i.e.*, by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them by sucking whose blood the people known as "gentlemen," have become and continue to be gentlemen! How many sepoys were brought by the Mussalmans? How many Englishmen are there? Where, except in India, can be had millions of men who will cut the throats of their own fathers and brothers for six rupees? Sixty millions of Mussalmans in seven hundred years of Mohammedan rule, and two millions of Christians in one hundred years of Christian rule—what makes it so? Why has originality entirely forsaken the country? Why are our deft-fingered

artisans daily becoming extinct, unable to compete with the Europeans? By what power again has the German labourer succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of the English labourer?

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant. In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come—down-trodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless and wooden-headed—with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months—the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedanta says that that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country—the whole of nature was telling him with one voice, "Pat, you have no more hope, you are born a slave and will remain so." Having been thus told from his birth, Pat believed in it and hypnotised himself that he was very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than he heard the shout going up on all sides, "Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything have courage!" Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up, Nature herself spoke, as it were, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached" (*Katha Upanishad, I iii 4*)

Likewise the education that our boys receive is very negative. The school-boy learns nothing, but has every-

thing of his own broken down—want of Shraddhâ is the result. The Shraddha which is the key-note of the Veda and the Vedanta—the Shraddha which emboldened Nachiketa to face Yama and question him, through which Shraddha this world moves—the annihilation of that Shraddha ! अज्ञानाद्दुःखानय सशयात्मा विनश्यति । —“The ignorant, the man devoid of Shraddha, the doubting self runs to ruin ” Therefore are we so near destruction The remedy now is the spread of education First of all, Self-knowledge I do not mean thereby, matted hair, staff, Kamandalu and mountain caves which the word suggests What do I mean then ? Cannot the knowledge by which is attained even freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, bring ordinary material prosperity ? Certainly it can. Freedom, dispassion, renunciation, all these are the very highest ideals, but स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ “Even a little of this Dharma saves from the great fear (of birth and death) ” Dualist, qualified-Monist, Monist, Shaiva, Vaishṇava, Shâkta, even the Buddhist and the Jain and others—whatever sects have arisen in India—are all at one in this respect, that infinite power is latent in this Jivâtman (individualised soul) , from the ant to the perfect man there is the same Atman in all, the difference being only in manifestation “As a farmer breaks the obstacles (to the course of water)” (Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra, Kaivalya-pâda, 3) That power manifests as soon as it gets the opportunity and the right place and time From the highest god to the meanest grass, the same power is present in all—whether manifested or not We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door

Secondly, along with this, education has to be imparted That is easy to say, but how to reduce it into practice ? There are thousands of unselfish, kind-hearted men in our country, who have renounced everything In the same way as they travel about and give religious instructions without any remuneration, so at least half of them can be

trained as teachers, or bearers of such education as we need most. For that, we want first of all a centre in the capital of each Presidency, from whence to spread slowly throughout the whole of India. Two centres have recently been started in Madras and Calcutta, there is hope of more soon. Then, the greater part of the education to the poor should be given orally, time is not yet ripe for schools. Gradually in these main centres will be taught agriculture, industry, etc., and workshops will be established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start centres for women, exactly like those for men. But you are aware how difficult that is in this country. Again, "The snake which bites, must take out its own poison"—and that this is going to be, is my firm conviction, the money required for these works would have to come from the West. And for that reason, our religion should be preached in Europe and America. Modern science has undermined the basis of religions like Christianity. Over and above that, luxury is about to kill the religious instinct itself. Europe and America are now looking towards India with expectant eyes—this is the time for philanthropy, this is the time to occupy the hostile strongholds.

In the West, women rule, all influence and power are theirs. If bold and talented women like yourself, versed in Vedanta, go to England to preach, I am sure that every year hundreds of men and women will become blessed by adopting the religion of the land of Bharata. The only woman who went over from our country was Ramâbâi; her knowledge of English, Western science and art was limited, still she surprised all. If any one like you goes, England will be stirred, what to speak of America! If an Indian woman in Indian dress preach there the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis of India—I see a

prophetic vision—there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world Will there be no woman in the land of Maitreyī, Khanâ, Lîlâvatî, Sâvitri and Ubhayabhârati, who will venture to do this? The Lord knows. England we shall conquer, England we shall possess, through the power of spirituality. नान्य पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय —“There is no other way of salvation ” Can salvation ever come by getting up meetings and societies? Our conquerors must be made Devas by the power of our spirituality. I am a humble mendicant, an itinerant monk, I am helpless and alone What can I do? You have the power of wealth, intellect and education ; will you forego this opportunity? Conquest of England, Europe and America—this should be our one supreme Mantra at present, in it lies the well-being of the country Expansion is the sign of life, and we must spread over the world with our spiritual ideals Alas ! this frame is poor, moreover, the physique of a Bengali , even under this labour a fatal disease has attacked it, but there is the hope—

उत्पत्स्यतेऽस्ति मम कीऽपि समानधर्मा ।

कालो ह्ययं निरवधिर्विपुला च पृथ्वी ॥

“A kindred spirit is or will be born out of the limitless time and populous earth to accomplish the work ”

About vegetarian diet I have to say this—first, my Master was a vegetarian , but if he was given meat offered to the Goddess, he used to hold it up to his head The taking of life is undoubtedly sinful, but so long as vegetable food is not made suitable to the human system, through progress in chemistry, there is no other alternative but meat-eating So long as man shall have to live a Râjasika (active) life under circumstances like the present, there is no other way except through meat-eating It is true that the Emperor Asoka saved the lives of millions of animals by the threat of the sword, but, is not the slavery of a thousand years more dreadful than that? Taking the



life of a few goats as against the inability to protect the honour of one's own wife and daughter, and to save the morsels for one's children from robbing hands—which of these is more sinful? Rather let those belonging to the upper ten, who do not earn their livelihood by manual labour, not take meat ; but the forcing of vegetarianism upon those who have to earn their bread by labouring day and night, is one of the causes of the loss of our national freedom. Japan is an example of what good and nourishing food can do

May the All-powerful Vishveshwari inspire your heart !

---

## OUR PRESENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

स ईश अनिर्वचनीयप्रेमस्वरूप.—“The Lord whose nature is unspeakable love ” That this characteristic of God mentioned by Nârada is manifest and admitted on all hands is the firm conviction of my life The aggregate of many individuals is called Samashti (the whole), and each individual is called Vyashti (a part) You and I—each is Vyashti, society is Samashti You, I, an animal, a bird, a worm, an insect, a tree, a creeper, the earth, a planet, a star—each is Vyashti, while this universe is Samashti, which is called Virât, Hiranyagarbha or Ishvara in Vedanta, and Brahmâ, Vishnu, Devi, etc , in the Purânas. Whether or not Vyashti has individual freedom, and if it has, what should be its measure, whether or not Vyashti should completely sacrifice its own will, its own happiness for Samashti—are the perennial problems before every society. Society everywhere is busy finding the solution of these problems These, like big waves, are agitating modern Western society The doctrine which demands the sacrifice of individual freedom to social supremacy is called socialism, while that which advocates the cause of the individual is called individualism

Our motherland is a glowing example of the results and consequence of the eternal subjection of the individual to society and forced self-sacrifice by dint of institution and discipline In this country men are born according to Shâstric injunctions, they eat and drink by prescribed rules throughout life, they go through marriage and kindred functions in the same way , in short, they even die according to Shastric injunctions This hard discipline.

<sup>1</sup> Written to a Bengali lady from Deoghar (Vaidyanâth).  
23rd December, 1900

with the exception of one great good point, is fraught with evil. The good point is that men can do one or two things well, with very little effort, having practised them every day through generations. The delicious rice and curry which a cook of this country prepares with the aid of three lumps of earth and a few sticks can be had nowhere else. With the simple mechanism of an antediluvian loom, worth one rupee, and the feet put in a pit, it is possible to make kincobs worth twenty rupees a yard, in this country alone. A torn mat, an earthen lamp, and that fed by castor oil—with the aid of materials such as these, wonderful *savants* are produced in this country alone. An all-forbearing attachment to an ugly and deformed wife, and a lifelong devotion to a worthless and villainous husband, are possible in this country alone. Thus far the bright side.

But all these things are done by people guided like lifeless machines. There is no mental activity, no unfolding of the heart, no vibration of life, no flux of hope, there is no strong stimulation of the will, no experience of keen pleasure, nor the contact of intense sorrow, there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty, no appreciation of new things. Clouds never pass away from this mind, the radiant picture of the morning sun never charms this heart. It never even occurs to this mind if there is any better state than this, where it does, it cannot convince, in the event of conviction, effort is lacking; and even where there is effort, lack of enthusiasm kills it out.

If living by rule alone ensures excellence, if it be virtue to follow strictly the rules and customs handed down through generations, say then, who is more virtuous than a tree, who is a greater devotee, a holier saint, than a railway train? Who has ever seen a piece of stone transgress a natural law? Who has ever known cattle to commit sin?

The huge steamer, the mighty railway engine—they are

non-intelligent, they move, turn and run, but they are without intelligence. And yonder tiny worm which moved away from the railway line to save its life, why is it intelligent? There is no manifestation of will in the machine, the machine never wishes to transgress law, the worm wants to oppose law, rises against law whether it succeeds or not, therefore it is intelligent. Greater is the happiness, higher is the Jiva, in proportion as this will is more successfully manifest. The will of God is perfectly fruitful, therefore He is the highest.

What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. Now consider, is that education, as a result of which the will being continuously choked by force through generations is now well-nigh killed out? Under whose sway—why mention new ideas, even the old ones are disappearing one by one—is that education which is slowly making man a machine? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong impelled by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as an automaton. Again, can that be called society which is formed by an aggregate of men who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines, like heaped up pebbles? How can such society fare well? Were good possible, then instead of being slaves for hundreds of years, we would have been the greatest nation on earth, and this soil of India, instead of being a mine of stupidity, would have been the eternal fountain-head of learning.

Is not self-sacrifice, then, a virtue? Is it not the most virtuous deed to sacrifice the happiness of one, the welfare of one, for the sake of the many? Exactly, but as the Bengali adage goes, "Can beauty be manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing? Can love be generated by effort and compulsion?" What glory is there in the renunciation of an eternal beggar? What virtue is there in the sense-

control of one devoid of sense-power? What again is the self-sacrifice of one devoid of idea, devoid of heart, devoid of high ambition and devoid of the conception of what constitutes society? What expression of devotedness to a husband is there by forcing a widow to commit Sati? Why make people do virtuous deeds by teaching superstitions? I say, liberate, undo the shackles of people as much as you can. Can dirt be washed by dirt? Can bondage be removed by bondage? Where is the instance? When you would be able to sacrifice all desire for happiness for the sake of society, then you would be the Buddha, then you would be free. that is far off. Again, do you think the way to it lies through oppression? "Oh, what examples of self-denial are our widows! Oh, how sweet is child-marriage! Is another such custom possible! Can there be anything but love between husband and wife in such a marriage!"—such is the whine going round nowadays. But as to the men, the masters of the situation, there is no need of self-denial for them! Is there a virtue higher than serving others? But the same does not apply to Brâhmanas—you others do it! The truth is that in this country parents and relatives can ruthlessly sacrifice the best interests of their children and others for their own selfish ends, to save themselves by a compromise to society, and the teaching of generations rendering the mind callous, has made it perfectly easy. He, the brave alone, can deny self. The coward, afraid of the lash, with one hand wipes his eyes and gives with the other. Of what avail are such gifts? It is a far cry to love universal. The young plant should be hedged in and taken care of. One can hope gradually to attain to universal love, if one can learn to love one object unselfishly. If devotion to one particular Ishtadeva is attained, devotion to the universal Virat is gradually possible.

Therefore, when one has been able to deny self for an individual, one should talk of self-sacrifice for the sake

of society, not before. It is action with desire that leads to action without desire. Is the renunciation of desire possible, if desire did not exist in the beginning? And what could it mean? Can light have any meaning if there is no darkness?

Worship with desire, with attachment, comes first. Commence with the worship of the little, then the greater will come of itself.

Mother, be not anxious. It is against the big tree that the great wind strikes. "Poking a fire makes it burn better"; "A snake struck on the head raises its hood"—and so on: When there comes affliction in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all around, and it seems light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest, that the light of Brahman within gleams. Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has ever become great, who has ever unfolded the Brahman within? Why do you fear to weep? Weep! Weeping clears the eyes and brings about intuition. Then the vision of diversity—man, animal, tree—slowly melting away, makes room for the infinite realisation of Brahman everywhere and in everything. Then,—

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।  
न हिनस्तात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

"Verily, seeing the same God equally existent everywhere, he does not injure the Self by the self, and so goes to the Supreme Goal."

---

## TO A FRIEND

*(Rendered from a Bengali poem composed by  
Swami Vivekananda)*

Where darkness is interpreted as light,  
Where misery passes for happiness,  
Where disease is pretended to be health,  
Where the new-born's cry but shows 'tis alive;  
Dost thou, O wise, expect happiness here?

Where war and competition ceaseless run,  
Even the father turns against the son,  
Where "self," "self"—this always the only note,  
Dost thou, O wise, seek for peace supreme here?

A glaring mixture of heaven and hell,  
Who can fly from this Samsâr of Mâyâ?  
Fastened in the neck with Karma's fetters,  
Say, where can the slave escape for safety?

The paths of Yoga and of sense-enjoyment,  
The life of the householder and Sannyâs,  
Devotion, worship and earning riches,  
Vows, Tyâga and austerities severe,  
I have seen through them all—What have I known?

—Have known there's not a jot of happiness,  
Life is only a cup of Tantalus,  
The nobler is your heart, know for certain,  
The more must be your share of misery.

Thou large-hearted Lover unselfish, know,  
 There's no room in this sordid world for thee,  
 Can a marble figure e'er brook the blow  
 That an iron mass can afford to bear?

Couldst thou be as one inert and abject,  
 Honey-mouthed, but with poison in thy heart,  
 Destitute of truth and worshipping self,  
 Then thou wouldst have a place in this Samsâr.

Pledging even life for gaining knowledge,  
 I have devoted half my days on earth,  
 For the sake of love, even as one insane,  
 I have often clutched at shadows lifeless,

For religion, many creeds have I sought,  
 Lived in mountain-caves, on cremation-grounds,  
 By the Ganges and other sacred streams,  
 And how many days have I passed on alms!

Friendless, clad in rags, with no possession,  
 Feeding from door to door on what chance would bring,  
 The frame broken under Tapasyâ's<sup>1</sup> weight;  
 What riches, ask thou, have I earned in life?

Listen, friend, I will speak my heart to thee;  
 I have found in my life this truth supreme—  
 Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life,  
 There's one ferry that takes across the sea<sup>2</sup>

Formulas of worship, control of breath,  
 Science, philosophy, systems varied,  
 Relinquishment, possession, and the like,  
 All these are but delusions of the mind—  
 Love, Love—that's the one thing, the sole treasure.

In Jiva and Brahman, in man and God,  
 In ghosts, and wraiths and spirits, and so forth

<sup>1</sup> Austerities  
 IV—28

<sup>2</sup> The sea of Samsâra



In Devas, beasts, birds, insects, and in worms,  
This Prema<sup>1</sup> dwells in the heart of them all.

Say, who else is the highest God of gods<sup>2</sup>  
Say, who else moves all the universe<sup>3</sup>  
The mother dies for her young, robber robs.  
Both are but the impulse of the same Love<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the ken of human speech and mind,  
It dwells in weal and woe, 'tis that which comes  
As the all-powerful, all-destroyer  
Kâli, and as the kindest mother

Disease, bereavement, pinch of poverty,  
Dharma,<sup>2</sup> and its opposite Adharma,<sup>3</sup>  
The results of actions good and bad, all  
Are but ITS worship in manifold modes,  
Say, what does by himself a Jiva do<sup>2</sup>

Deluded is he who happiness seeks,  
Lunatic he who misery wishes,  
Insane he too who fondly longs for death,  
Immortality—vain aspiration<sup>1</sup>

Far, far, however far you may travel,  
Mounted on the brilliant mental car,  
'Tis the same ocean of the Samsâr,  
Happiness and misery whirling on

Listen, O Vihaṅgam,<sup>4</sup> bereft of wings,  
'Tis not the way to make good your escape ;  
Time and again you get blows, and collapse,  
Why then attempt what is impossible<sup>2</sup>

Let go your vain reliance on knowledge,  
Let go your prayers, offerings and strength,

<sup>1</sup> Love;<sup>2</sup> Virtue<sup>3</sup> Vice<sup>4</sup> Bird, here addressed to the bound soul

For Love selfless is the only resource,  
Lo, the insects teach, embracing the flame.

The base insect's blind, by beauty charmed.  
Thy soul is drunken with the wine of Love ,  
O thou Lover true, cast into the fire  
All thy dross of self, thy mean selfishness

Say—comes happiness e'er to a beggar?  
What good being object of charity?  
Give away, ne'er turn to ask in return,  
Should there be the wealth treasured in thy heart

Aye, born heir to the Infinite thou art,  
Within the heart is the ocean of Love,  
"Give," "Give away"—whoever asks return,  
His ocean dwindles down to a mere drop

From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,  
And to the very minutest atom,  
Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love,  
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet

These are His manifold forms before thee,  
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?  
Who loves all beings, without distinction,  
He indeed is worshipping best his God

---

## THE HYMN OF CREATION

*(Rendered from Bengali)*

One Mass, devoid of form, name and colour,  
Timeless, devoid of time past and future,  
Spaceless, voiceless, boundless, devoid of all—  
Where rests hushed even speech of negation,<sup>1</sup>

From thence, down floweth the river causal,  
Wearing the form of desire radiant,  
Its heaving waters angrily roaring  
The constant roar, "I am," "I am," "I am "

In that ocean of desire limitless,  
Appear shining waves, countless, infinite,  
Oh, of what power manifold they are,  
Of what forms myriad, of what repose,  
Of what movements varied, who can reckon?

Millions of moons, millions of suns,  
Taking their birth in that very ocean,  
Rushing headlong with din tumultuous,  
Overspread the whole firmament, drowning  
The points of heaven, in light effulgent.

In it arise and reside what beings,  
Quick with life, dull and lifeless,—unnumbered,  
And pleasure and pain, disease, birth and death!  
Verily, the Sun is He, His the ray,  
Nay, the Sun is He, and He is the ray.

<sup>1</sup> "Neti, Neti," "Not this, not this" Brahman cannot be described in any other way

## THE HYMN OF SAMADHI

*(Rendered from Bengali)*

Lo! The sun is not, nor the comely moon,  
All light extinct, in the great void of space  
Floats shadow-like the image-universe.

In the void of mind involute, there floats  
The fleeting universe, rises and floats,  
Sinks again, ceaseless, in the current "I "

Slowly, slowly, the shadow-multitude  
Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless,  
The only current, the "I am," "I am."

Lo! 'Tis stopped, ev'n that current flows no more,  
Void merged into void—beyond speech and mind!  
Whose heart understands, he verily does

---

## A HYMN TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

अम्बास्तोत्रम् ।

का त्वं शुभे शिवकरे सुखदुःखहस्ते  
आधूर्णितं भवजलं प्रबलोर्मिभङ्गैः ।  
शान्तिं विधातुमिह किं बहुधा विभङ्गाम्  
मातः प्रयत्नपरमासि सदैव विश्वे ॥

O Thou most beautiful! Whose holy hands  
Hold pleasure and hold pain! Doer of good!  
Who art Thou? The water of existence

By Thee is whirled and tossed in mighty waves.  
Is it, O Mother, to restore again  
This universe's broken harmony  
That Thou, without cessation, art at work?

संपादयत्यविरतं त्वविरामवृत्ता  
या वै स्थिता कृतफलं त्वकृतस्य नेत्री ।  
सा मे भवत्वनुदिनं वरदा भवानी  
जानाम्यहं ध्रुवमिदं धृतकर्मपाशा ॥

Oh! May the Mother of the universe—  
In whose activity no respite rests,  
Incessantly distributing the fruits  
Of action done, guiding unceasingly  
All action yet to come—bestow Her boon  
Of blessing on me, Her child, for evermore.

I realise, I know, that it is Thou  
Who holdest in Thy hands dread Karma's ropes.

को वा धर्मः किमकृतं कः कपाललेखः  
किंवाद्गृष्टं फलमिहास्ति हि यां विना भोः ।  
इच्छापाशैर्नियमिता नियमाः स्वतन्त्रैः  
यस्या नेत्री भवतु सा शरणं ममाद्या ॥

Is it inherent nature? Something uncreate?  
Or Destiny? Some unforeseen result?—  
Who, lacking nothing, is accountable,  
Whose chain of will, untrammelled, grasps the laws,  
May She, the Primal Guide, my shelter be!

सन्तानयन्ति जलधिं जनिमृत्युजालं

सम्भावयन्त्यविकृतं विभग्नम् ।

यस्या विभूतय इहामितशक्तिपालाः

नाश्रित्य तां वद कुतः शरणं ब्रजामः ॥

Manifestations of Her glory show  
In power of immeasurable might,  
Throughout the universe, powers that swell  
The sea of birth and death, forces that change  
And break up the Unchanged and changed again  
Lo! Where shall we seek refuge, save in Her?

मित्रेशत्रौ अविषमं तव पद्मनेत्रम्

स्वस्थे दुःस्थे त्ववितथं तव हस्तपातः ।

मृत्युच्छया तव दया अमृतञ्च मातः

मा मां मुञ्चन्तु परमे क्षुभद्वष्ट्यस्ते ॥

To friend and foe 'Thy lotus-eyes are even,  
Ever Thine animating touch brings fruit  
To fortunate and unfortunate alike,  
The shade of death, and immortality—  
Both these, O Mother, are Thy grace Supreme!  
Mother Supreme! Oh, may Thy gracious face  
Never be turned away from me, Thy child!

क्वाम्बा सर्वा क गृणनं मम हीनबुद्धेः

धत्तुं दोर्म्यामिव मतिर्जगदेकधात्रीम् ।

श्रीसञ्चिन्त्यं सुचरणं अभयप्रतिष्ठम्

सेवासारैरभिनुतं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

What Thou art, the Mother! the All, How praise?  
My understanding is so little worth.

'Twere like desire to seize with hands of mine  
The sole Supporter of the universe !

So, at Thy blessed feet—contemplated  
By the Goddess of Fortune Herself—the abode  
Of fearlessness, worshipped by service true—

There, at those blessed feet, I take refuge !

या मामाजन्म विनयत्यतिदुःखमार्गैः

आसंसिद्धेः खकलितैर्ललितैर्विलासैः ।

या मे बुद्धिं सुविदधे सततं धरण्याम्

साम्बा सर्वा मम गतिः सफलेऽफले वा ॥

She who, since birth, has ever led me on  
Through paths of trouble to perfection's goal,  
Mother-wise, in Her own sweet playful ways,  
She, who has always through my life inspired  
My understanding, She, my Mother, She,  
The All, is my resort, whether my work  
O'erflow with full fruition, or with none

## A HYMN TO SHIVA

शिवस्तोत्रम्

ओं नमः शिवाय

निखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभङ्गप्ररोहाः

अकलितमहिमानः, कल्पिता यत्र तस्मिन् ।

सुविमलगगनामे ईशसंस्थेऽप्यनीशे

मम भवतु भवेऽस्मिन् भासुरो भाववन्धः ॥

Salutation to Shiva! Whose glory  
Is immeasurable, Who resembles sky  
In clearness, to whom are attributed  
The phenomena of all creation,  
The preservation and dissolution  
Of the universe! May the devotion,  
The burning devotion of this my life  
Attach itself to Him, to Shiva, who,  
While being Lord of all, transcends Himself,

निहतनिखिलमोहेऽधीशता यत्र रुढ़ा  
प्रकटितपरमप्रेम्ना यो महादेवसंज्ञः ।  
आशथिलपरिभः प्रेमरूपस्य यस्य  
हृदि प्रणयति विश्वं व्याजमात्रं विभुत्वम् ॥

In whom Lordship is ever established,  
Who causes annihilation of delusion,  
Whose most surpassing love, made manifest,  
Has crowned Him with a name above all names,  
The name of "Mahâdeva," the Great God!  
Whose warm embrace, of Love personified,  
Displays, within man's heart, that all power  
Is but a semblance and a passing show,

बहति विपुलवातः पूर्णसंस्काररूपः  
प्रमथति बलवृन्दं घूर्णितेवोमिमाला ।  
प्रचलति खलु युग्मं युस्मदस्मत्प्रतीतं  
अतिविकलितरूपं नौमि चित्तं शिवस्थम् ॥

In which the tempest of the whole past blows,  
Past Samskâras,<sup>1</sup> stirring the energies

<sup>1</sup> The accumulated effects of past desires and actions



With violence, like water lashed to waves ;  
In which the dual consciousness of "I" and "Thou"  
Plays on.—

I salute that mind unstable,  
Centred in Shiva, the abode of calm !

जनकजनितभावो वृत्तयः संस्कृताश्च  
अगणनवह्नुरूपो यत्र एको यथार्थः ।  
शमितविकृतिवाते यत्र नान्तर्वहिश्च  
तमहह हरमीडे चित्तवृत्तेर्निरोधम् ॥

Where the ideas of parent and produced,  
Purified thoughts, and endless varied forms,  
Merge in the Real one, where the existence ends  
Of such conceptions as "within," "without"—  
The wind of modification being stilled—  
That Hara I worship, the suppression  
Of movements of the mind Shiva I hail !

गलिततिमिरमालः शुभ्रतेजःप्रकाशः  
धवलकमलशोभः ज्ञानपुञ्जाट्टहासः ।  
यमिजनहृदिगम्यः निष्कलं ध्यायमानः  
प्रणतमवतु मां सः मानसो राजहंसः ॥

From whom all gloom and darkness have dispersed ;  
That radiant Light, white, beautiful  
As bloom of lotus white is beautiful ;  
Whose laughter loud sheds knowledge luminous ;  
Who, by undivided meditation,  
Is realised in the self-controlled heart.—

May that Lordly Swan of the limpid lake  
Of my mind, guard me, prostrate before Him !

दुरितदलनदक्षं दक्षजादत्तदोषं  
कलितकलिकलङ्कं कम्पकह्वारकान्तं ।

परहितकरणाय प्राणविच्छेदसूक्तं  
नतनयननियुक्तं नीलकण्ठं नमामः ॥

Him, the Master-remover of evil,  
Who wipes the dark stain of this Iron Age ;  
Whom Daksha's Daughter gave Her coveted hand ,  
Who, like the charming water-lily white,  
Is beautiful , who is ready ever  
To part with life for others' good, whose gaze  
Is on the humble fixed , whose neck is blue<sup>1</sup>  
With the poison<sup>2</sup> swallowed —

Him, we salute !

## A HYMN TO THE DIVINITY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(Rendered from Bengali)

We salute Thee !

Lord ! Adored of the world,  
Samsâra's bondage breaker, taintless Thou,  
Embodiment of blessed qualities,  
Thou transcendest all Gunas , human form  
Thou bearest

Thee we salute and adore !

Refuge of mind and speech, Thou art beyond  
The reach of either    Radiance art Thou  
In all radiance that is    The heart's cave  
Is by Thy visitance resplendent made.

<sup>1</sup> Nilakantha, a name of Shiva    <sup>2</sup> The all-destructive evil.

Verily Thou art that which dispelleth  
The densest darkness of Tamas in man.

Lo! In variety of melody  
Forth-breaking in fine harmony most sweet,  
Hymns of Thy devotees, accompanied  
By Mṛidanga<sup>1</sup> playing with music's grace,  
Fill the air, in evening worship to Thee.

One glancing vision at Thine eyes divine  
Cleared by the collyrium of Jnâna  
Defies delusion O Thou blotter-out  
Of all the taints of sin, Intelligence  
Pure, unmingled, is Thy form Of the world  
Thou art embellisher Self-luminous  
Art Thou O Ocean of feeling sublime  
And of Love Divine, O God-maddened One,  
Devotees win Thy blessed feet, and cross  
Safely the swelling sea of Samsara.

O Lord of the world, through Thy Yoga power  
Thou shinest as the Incarnation clear  
Of this our time O thou of strict restraint,  
Only through Thine unstinted grace we see  
The mind in Samâdhi completely merged,  
Mercy Incarnate! austere are Thy deeds

Thou dealest to the evil of Misery  
Destruction Kali's<sup>2</sup> binding cords  
Are cut by Thee asunder Thine own life  
Thou gavest freely, O sweet Sacrifice,  
O best of men! O Saviour of the world!

Devoid wert Thou of the idea of sex,  
Thought of possession charmed Thee not To Thee  
Obnoxious was all pleasure Give to us,

<sup>1</sup> A kind of drum

<sup>2</sup> The Iron Age

O greatest among Tyâgis,<sup>1</sup> love intense  
Unto Thy sacred feet, give, we implore!

Fearless art Thou, and past all gloom of doubt;  
Thy mind is wrapt in its own firm resolve,  
Thy lovers, whose devotion mounts above  
The realm of reason, who renounce the pride  
Of caste and parentage, of name and fame—  
Their safe refuge art Thou alone, O Lord!

My one true treasure is Thy blessed feet,  
Reaching which the whole universe itself  
Seems like a puddle in the hollow made  
By hoof of passing cow

O offering

To Love! O Seer of equality  
In all! O verily, in Thee the pain  
And evil of this mortal world escapes,  
And vanishes, O cherished One, in Thee!

---

## “AND LET SHYAMA DANCE THERE”

*(Rendered from Bengali)*

Beauteous blossoms ravishing with perfume,  
Swarms of maddened bees buzzing all around;  
The silver moon—a shower of sweet smile,  
Which all the dwellers of heaven above

<sup>1</sup> Renouncers.

Shed lavishly upon the homes of earth ;  
 The soft Malaya<sup>1</sup> breeze, whose magic touch  
 Opens to view distant memory's folds ,  
 Murmuring rivers and brooks, rippling lakes  
 With restless Bhramaras<sup>2</sup> wheeling over  
 Gently waving lotuses unnumbered ,  
 Foaming flow cascades—a streaming music—  
 To which echo mountain caves in return ,  
 Warblers, full of sweet-flowing melody,  
 Hidden in leaves, pour hearts out—love discourse ;  
 The rising orb of day, the painter divine,  
 With his golden brush but lightly touches  
 The canvas earth and a wealth of colours  
 Floods at once o'er the bosom of Nature,  
 —Truly a museum of lovely hues—  
 Waking up a whole sea of sentiments

The roll of thunder, the crashing of clouds,  
 War of elements spreading earth and sky ,  
 Darkness vomiting forth blinding darkness,  
 The Pralaya<sup>3</sup> wind angrily roaring ;  
 In quick bursts of dazzling splendour flashes  
 Blood-red terrific lightning, dealing death ,  
 Monster waves roaring like thunder, foaming,  
 Rush impetuous to leap mountain peaks ,  
 The earth booms furious, reels and totters,  
 Sinks down to its ruin, hurled from its place ,  
 Piercing the ground, stream forth tremendous flames,  
 Mighty ranges blow up into atoms

A lovely villa, on a lake of blue—  
 Festooned with clusters of water-lilies ;

<sup>1</sup> Malaya—a fabulous Sandal-wood mountain in the South. Hence, Malaya breeze means a fragrant breeze from the South

<sup>2</sup> A beetle somewhat like a humble-bee, which lives solely on honey

<sup>3</sup> The time of cosmic destruction

The heart-blood of grape-fruits capped with white foam  
Whispering softly tells tale of passion ,  
The melody of the harp floods the ears,  
And by its air, time and harmony rich,  
Enhances desire in the breast of man ,  
What stirring of emotions! How many  
Hot sighs of love! And warm tears coursing down!  
The Bimba<sup>1</sup>-red lips of the youthful fair,  
The two blue eyes—two oceans of feelings ,  
The two hands eager to advance—love's cage—  
In which the heart, like a bird, lies captive

The martial music bursts, the trumpets blow,  
The ground shakes under the warriors' tread ,  
The roar of cannon, the rattle of guns,  
Volumes of smoke, the gruesome battle-field,  
The thundering artillery vomits fire  
In thousand directions , shells burst and strike  
Vital parts of the body , elephants  
And horses mounted are blown up in space ,  
The earth trembles under this infernal dance ,  
A million heroes mounted on steeds  
Charge and capture the enemy's ordnance,  
Piercing through the smoke and shower of shells  
And rain of bullets ; forward goes the flag,  
The emblem of victory, of heroism  
With the blood, yet hot, streaming down the staff,  
Followed by the rifles, drunk with war-spirit ,  
Lo! the ensign falls, but the flag proceeds  
Onwards on the shoulder of another ,  
Under his feet swell heaps of warriors  
Perished in battle , but he falters not

The flesh hankers for contacts of pleasure,  
The senses for enchanting strains of song,  
The mind hungers for peals of laughter sweet,

<sup>1</sup> A kind of fruit of a rich red colour

The heart pants to reach realms beyond sorrow ;  
 Say, who cares exchange the soothing moonlight  
 For the burning rays of the noontide sun?  
 The wretch whose heart is like the scorching sun,  
 —Even he fondly loves the balmy moon ,  
 Indeed, all thirst for joy    Breathes there the wretch  
 Who hugs pain and sorrow to his bosom ?  
 Misery in his cup of happiness,  
 Deadly venom in his drink of nectar,  
 Poison in his throat—yet he clings to hope !  
 Lo ! how all are scared by the Terrific,  
 None seek Elokeshī<sup>1</sup> whose form is Death.  
 The deadly frightful sword, reeking with blood,  
 They take from Her hand, and put a lute instead !  
 Thou dreaded Kâli, the All-destroyer,  
 Thou alone art True , Thy shadow's shadow  
 Is indeed the pleasant Vanamâli<sup>2</sup>  
 O Terrible Mother, cut quick the core,  
 Illusion dispel—the dream of happiness,  
 Rend asunder the fondness for the flesh

True, they garland Thee with skulls, but shrink back  
 In fright, and call Thee, "O All-merciful !"  
 At Thy thunder peal of awful laughter,  
 At Thy nakedness—for space is Thy garment—  
 Their hearts sink down with terror, but they say,  
 "It is the demons that the Mother kills !"  
 They only pretend they wish to see Thee,  
 But when the time comes, at Thy sight they flee.  
 Thou art Death ! To each and all in the world  
 Thou distributest the plague and disease  
 —Vessels of venom filled by Thine own hands

<sup>1</sup> She with untied hair, a name of Kâli, the Divine Mother of the Universe

<sup>2</sup> Literally, He who is garlanded with wild flowers. The Shepherd Krishna in His aspect of youthful sport

O thou insane ! Thou but cheatest thyself,  
 Thou dost not turn thy head lest thou behold,  
 Aye, the form terrible of the Mother.  
 Thou courtest hardship hoping happiness,  
 Thou wearest cloak of Bhakti and worship,  
 With mind full of achieving selfish ends.  
 The blood from the severed head of a kid  
 Fills thee with fear—thy heart throbs at the sight—  
 Verily a coward ! Compassionate<sup>1</sup>  
 Bless my soul ! A strange state of things indeed !  
 To whom shall I tell the truth ?—Who will see ?

Free thyself from the mighty attraction—  
 The maddening wine of love, the charm of sex  
 Break the harp ! Forward, with the ocean's cry !  
 Drink tears, pledge even life—let the body fall.  
 Awake, O hero ! Shake off thy vain dreams,  
 Death stands at thy head—does fear become thee ?  
 A load of misery, true though it is—  
 This Becoming<sup>2</sup>—know this to be thy God !  
 His temple—the Shmashân<sup>3</sup> among corpses  
 And funeral pyres , unending battle—  
 That verily is His sacred worship ,  
 Constant defeat—let that not unnerve thee ,  
 Shattered be little self, hope, name and fame ;  
 Set up a pyre of them, and make thy heart  
 A burning-ground  
 And let Shyâmâ<sup>4</sup> dance there

---

<sup>1</sup> The idea is that the brave alone can be compassionate, and not the coward

<sup>2</sup> The wheel of constant birth and death, hence the world

<sup>3</sup> The cremation-ground

<sup>4</sup> The Dark One, Kali



## A SONG I SING TO THEE

*(Rendered from Bengali)*

A song I sing    A song I sing to Thee !  
Nor care I for men's comments, good or bad.  
Censure or praise I hold of no account.

Servant am I, true servant of Thee Both,<sup>1</sup>  
Low at Thy feet, with Sakti, I salute !

Thou standest, steadfast, ever at my back,  
Hence when I turn me round, I see Thy face,  
Thy smiling face.    Therefore I sing again  
And yet again    Therefore I fear no fear ,  
For birth and death lie prostrate at my feet

Thy servant am I through birth after birth,  
Sea of mercy, inscrutable Thy ways ,  
'So is my destiny inscrutable ;  
It is unknown , nor would I wish to know.  
Bhakti, Mukti, Japam, Tapas, all these,  
Enjoyment, worship, and devotion too  
These things, and all things similar to these,  
I have expelled at Thy supreme command  
But only one desire is left in me—  
An intimacy with Thee, mutual !

Take me, O Lord, across to Thee ,  
Let no desire's dividing line prevent

The eye looks out upon the universe,  
Nor does it seek to look upon itself ,  
'Why should it ?' It sees itself in others.

<sup>1</sup> Purusha and Prakriti together.

Thou art my eyes, aye! Thou and Thou alone,  
For every living temple shrines Thy face

Like to the playing of a little child  
Is every attitude of mine toward Thee.  
Even, at times, I dare be angered with Thee,  
Even, at times, I'd wander far away,—  
Yet there, in greyest gloom of darkest night,  
Yet there, with speechless mouth and tearful eyes,  
Thou standest fronting me, and Thy sweet Face  
Stoops down with loving look on face of mine.  
Then, instantly, I turn me back to Thee,  
And at Thy feet I fall on bended knees

I crave no pardon at Thy gentle hands,  
For Thou art never angry with Thy son  
Who else with all my foolish freaks would bear?

Thou art my Master! Thou my soul's real mate  
Many a time I see Thee—I am Thee!  
Aye! I am Thee, and Thou, my Lord, art me!  
Thou art within my speech. Within my throat  
Art Thou, as Vinâpâni,<sup>1</sup> learned, wise.  
On the flow of Thy current and its force  
Humanity is carried as Thou wilt  
The thunder of Thy Voice is borne upon the boom  
Of crashing waves of over-leaping seas;  
The sun and moon give utterance to Thy Voice.  
Thy conversation, in the gentle breeze  
Makes itself heard in truth, in very truth,  
True! True! And yet, the while, these gross precepts  
Give not the message of the Higher Truth  
Known to the knower!

Lo! The sun, the moon,  
The moving planets and the shining stars,  
Spheres of abode by myriads in the skies,

<sup>1</sup> Goddess of learning

The comet swift, the glimmering lightning-flash,  
The firmament, expanded, infinite—  
These all, observant watchful eyes behold.

Anger, desire, greed, Moha,<sup>1</sup> and the rest,<sup>2</sup>  
Whence issues forth the waving of the play  
Of this existence, the home wherein dwells  
Knowledge, and non-knowledge—whose centre is  
The feeling of small self, the "Aham!" "Aham!"—  
Full of the dual sense of pleasure and of pain,  
Teeming with birth and life, decay and death,  
Whose arms are "The External" and "The Internal",  
All things that are, down to the ocean's depths,  
Up to sun, moon, and stars in spanless space—  
The Mind, the Buddhi, Chitta, Ahamkâr,  
The Deva, Yaksha, man and demon, all,  
The quadruped, the bird, the worm, all insect life,  
The atom and its compound, all that is,  
Animate and inanimate, all, all—  
The Internal and the External—dwell  
In that one common plane of existence!

This outward presentation is of order gross,  
As hair on human brow, Aye! very gross.

On the spurs of the massive Mount Meru<sup>3</sup>  
The everlasting snowy ranges lie,  
Extending miles and miles beyond more miles.  
Piercing through clouds into the sky above  
Its peaks thrust up in hundreds, glorious,  
Brilliantly glistening, countless, snowy-white;  
Flash upon flash of vivid lightning fleet,  
The sun, high in his northern solstice hung,

<sup>1</sup> Delusion

<sup>2</sup> Such as pride and malice, the sixfold evil

<sup>3</sup> The name of a fabulous mountain round which the planets are said to revolve

With force of thousand rays concentrating,  
 Pours down upon the mountain floods of heat,  
 Furious as a billion thunderbolts,  
 From peak to peak.

Behold! The radiant sun  
 Swoons, as it were, in each Then melts  
 The massive mountain with its crested peaks!  
 Down, down, it falls, with a horrific crash!

Water with water lies commingled now,  
 And all has passed like to a passing dream.

When all the many movements of the mind  
 Are, by Thy grace, made one, and unified,  
 The light of that unfoldment is so great  
 That, in its splendour, it surpasses far  
 The brilliance of ten thousand rising suns.  
 Then, sooth, the sun of Chit<sup>1</sup> reveals itself  
 And melt away the sun and moon and stars,  
 High heaven above, the nether worlds, and all!  
 This universe seems but a tiny pool  
 Held in a hollow caused by some cow's hoof

—This is the reaching of the region which  
 Beyond the plane of the External lies

Calmed are the clamours of the urgent flesh,  
 The tumult of the boastful mind is hushed,  
 Cords of the heart are loosened and set free,  
 Unfastened are the bondages that bind,  
 Attachment and delusion are no more!

Aye! There sounds sonorous the Sound  
 Void of vibration Verily! Thy Voice!

Hearing that Voice, Thy servant, reverently,  
 Stands ever ready to fulfil Thy work

"I exist

When, at Pralaya time  
 This wondrous universe is swallowed up,

<sup>1</sup> Knowledge.

Knowledge, the knower and the known, dissolved ;  
 The world no more distinguishable, now,  
 No more conceivable ; when sun and moon  
 And all the outspent stars, remain no more—  
 Then is the state of Mahâ-Nirvâna,  
 When action, act, and actor, are no more,  
 When instrumentality is no more ;  
 Great darkness veils the bosom of the dark—  
                   There I am present.

“I am présent !

                  At Pralaya time,  
 When this vast universe is swallowed up,  
 Knowledge, and knower, and the known  
 Merged into one.

                  The universe no more  
 Can be distinguished or can be conceived  
 By intellect   The sun and moon and stars are not.  
 Over the bosom of the darkness, darkness moves  
 Intense   Devoid of all the threefold bonds,  
 Remains the universe. Gunas are calmed  
 Of all distinctions   Everything deluged  
 In one homogeneous mass, subtle,  
 Pure, of atom-form, indivisible—  
                   There I am present.

Once again, I unfold Myself—that “I” ,  
 Of My “Sakti” the first great change is Om ,  
 The Primal Voice rings through the void ;  
 Infinite Space hears that great vibrant sound.  
 The group of Primal Causes shakes off sleep,  
 New life revives atoms interminable ,  
 Cosmic existence heaves and whirls and sways,  
 Dances and gyrates, moves towards the core,  
 From distances immeasurably far.

The animate Wind arouses rings of Waves  
 Over the Ocean of great Elements ,  
 ' Stirring, falling, surging, that vast range of Waves  
 Rushes with lightning fury. Fragments thrown  
 By force of royal resistance, through the path  
 Of space, rush, endless, in the form of spheres  
 Celestial, numberless Planets and stars  
 Speed swift , and man's abode, the earth revolves

"At the Beginning, I, the Omniscient One,  
 I am! The moving and the un-moving,  
 All this Creation comes into being  
 By the unfoldment of My power supreme  
 I play with My own Mâyâ, My Power Divine  
 ' The One, I become the many, to behold  
 My own Form

"At the Beginning, I, the Omniscient One,  
 I am! The moving and the un-moving,  
 All this Creation comes into being  
 By the unfoldment of My power supreme.  
 Perforce of My command, the wild storm blows  
 On the face of the earth , clouds clash and roar ,  
 The flash of lightning startles and rebounds ,

Softly and gently the Malaya breeze  
 Flows in and out like calm, unruffled breath ,  
 The moon's rays pour their cooling current forth ,  
 The earth's bare body in fair garb is clothed,  
 Of trees and creepers multitudinous ;  
 And the flower a-bloom lifts her happy face,  
 Washed with drops of dew, toward the sun "



